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ASSET MANAGEMENT

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[†]Source: FE fundinfo. TM CRUX European Special Situations Fund I Acc GBP, bid – bid, income re-invested 1.10.09 – 31.12.19

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The movie that
made Oscars
history

FILM P32



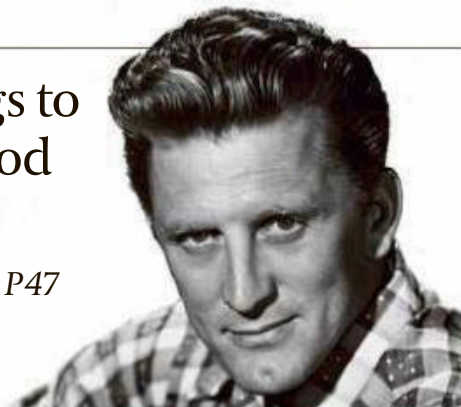
Why I spoke
out against
racism

NAGA MUNCHETTY
P10



From rags to
Hollywood
riches

OBITUARIES P47



THE WEEK

15 FEBRUARY 2020 | ISSUE 1266 | £3.80

THE BEST OF THE BRITISH AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Full speed ahead

A green light for HS2

Page 4



REAL SUSTAINABILITY ANSWERS BEFORE IT'S ASKED

We adopted sustainability practices such as zero routine flaring decades before they became industry standards. As a result, a recent study of over 100 oil fields in 20 countries showed that our crude oil has the lowest carbon intensity among large producers, proving our commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and powering a more sustainable future.

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4 NEWS

The main stories...

What happened

The march of Covid-19

The death toll from the coronavirus outbreak in China rose above 1,100 this week, surpassing in just two months the 774 fatalities caused by the eight-month Sars outbreak of 2002-03. On Monday, more than 100 people died in Hubei province alone; there are now more than 44,000 confirmed cases across the country. The spread of the disease, which the World Health Organisation has officially named Covid-19, has fuelled domestic criticism of Beijing's handling of the crisis. There was a particular outpouring of grief and anger in China last week when Li Wenliang – the 33-year-old doctor who was arrested for spreading “false rumours” after he alerted colleagues to the outbreak – himself succumbed to the disease.

As of Wednesday, Covid-19 had caused two deaths outside mainland China – one in Hong Kong and one in the Philippines – and infected around 400 people in 24 countries. Almost half of those patients are on a cruise ship now quarantined off Japan. Eight people in the UK are known to have the virus; the source of all but two of the infections is a man from Hove who contracted the virus in Singapore.



Li: arrested for raising the alarm

What the editorials said

Beijing has accused the UK – which last week advised all British citizens to leave China if they could – of overreacting to this outbreak, said The Daily Telegraph. And maybe we have. It's hard to tell, though, given the lack of transparency in China. If this virus had “started in Wisconsin rather than Wuhan”, we'd know everything. As it is, it's unclear whether even Beijing is fully aware of what is happening. The “most vital commodity in any public health crisis” is trust, said The Times. Attempts to conceal this outbreak in its early stages, to avoid disrupting the Communist Party's annual congress in early January, badly undermined that.

The virus has exposed the flaws in China's authoritarian system, said The Guardian. The fact that Li Wenliang was punished for sending a private message to other doctors “shows how far the space for discussion has shrunk”. Li's death has revealed a “state that is capable of lying to its citizens to save face”, even when lives are at stake, said the FT. China has lifted millions out of poverty over the past 40 years, but it needs a new governance model that offers its people respect as well as material well-being. As Li said before his death: “A healthy society should not have only one kind of voice.”

What happened

A green light for HS2

Boris Johnson ended months of speculation on Tuesday by confirming that the HS2 high-speed rail project will go ahead. Building work on the line's first phase, linking London to Birmingham, will begin next month, to be completed by 2031. Its second phase, linking the line to Manchester and Leeds, will be put on hold pending a six-month review and will be renamed High Speed North. “The Cabinet has given high-speed rail the green signal,” said Johnson. “We're going to get this done.”

In an attempt to “restore discipline” to the programme – which has been beset by delays and has seen projected costs balloon from £32.7bn to £106bn – a new minister will be appointed to oversee it. And HS2 Ltd, the government-owned company created to deliver the 345-mile line, will be given a downgraded role: it will be stripped of the power to run the second phase and will lose responsibility for redeveloping Euston station, the main London terminus.



Sajid Javid and Johnson

What the editorials said

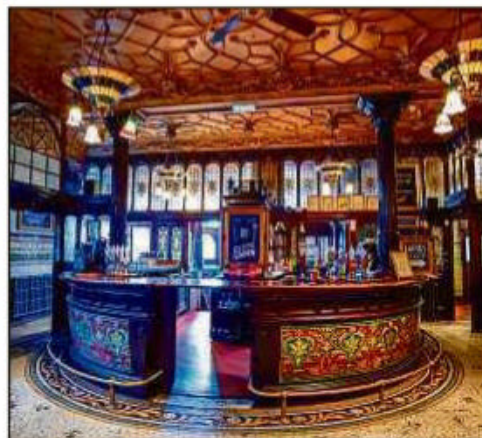
“There can be no excuse for further delays,” said The Times. Britain hasn't built an intercity rail line in more than a century; our railways are creaking under the weight of capacity and our roads are overcrowded. HS2 – Europe's largest infrastructure project – is “vital” to improving connections and productivity outside London. Like most mega-projects, it has been poorly managed, said the FT. Costs have spiralled, and delays have been many. “But the long-term benefits which could be felt decades from now are worth the risk.”

Criticisms of the scheme are well-rehearsed, said The Daily Telegraph. Don't local improvements offer better value for money? Can't longer trains provide extra capacity? Must we really “desecrate the countryside to shave a few minutes off travel times”? We share those reservations, said the Daily Mail. But the Tories won the election with a pitch to “level up” Britain; abandoning the project now would have been a “massive climbdown”. Even so, the scale of opposition both inside and outside his party means this is a “bold statement of purpose” from the PM.

It wasn't all bad

A 43-year-old vet has become an unlikely hero of the public health emergency in Wuhan, by rescuing some 2,000 cats from starvation. Lao Mao stepped in after seeing frantic messages on social media from people who were trapped outside the quarantined city, and could not get home to feed their pets. Most were able to send him their keys or door codes, but in some cases, he and his helpers have shinned up drain pipes and climbed through windows to feed the animals.

One of Liverpool's most magnificently ornate buildings has become the first purpose-built pub in England to be given Grade I listed status. The Philharmonic Dining Rooms – better known as “The Phil” – was built between 1898 and 1900 by architect Walter W. Thomas. Historic England said that it was regarded as a “cathedral among pubs” on account of its grand exterior and richly decorated interior, which includes a spectacular men's lavatory. A Liverpool institution, it was a haunt of the Beatles. Asked once what was the worst thing about fame, John Lennon replied: “Not being able to have a pint in the Phil”.



A mentoring scheme set up by a 22-year-old Oxford graduate has helped 60 underprivileged youngsters win Oxbridge offers. State-school-educated Joe Seddon decided to use the £200 he had left over from his grant to help others like him navigate Oxbridge's “scary” admissions process. The Access Oxbridge app puts Year 12 pupils in touch with current students, who give them one to one advice in hour-long online tutorials. “It's the sort of preparation that students who attend private schools and top state schools get,” he says.

COVER CARTOON: HOWARD MCWILLIAM

...and how they were covered

NEWS 5

What the commentators said

When the Sars epidemic hit in 2002-03, just 6% of China's citizens were online, said Yuan Yang in the FT; today, almost 60% are. The proliferation of social media has had a big impact, providing alternative information to the tightly controlled state media. It has led to a lot of useful citizen reporting, such as the video blogs showing the deserted streets of Wuhan – but also a lot of fake news. Many a Chinese grandparent has posted bogus medical tips online, advising relatives to dab vinegar or sesame oil in their nostrils, or to avoid wearing wool. People outside China are also panicking, said Zoe Strimpel in The Sunday Telegraph. Increasing numbers of London Underground users are wearing face masks. A plant near Angers in France that usually makes 170 million masks a year is now working to meet orders for half a billion.

Only time will tell whether this alarmism is warranted, said Andrew Gimson on Conservative Home. The virus might peter out, or it might get a lot worse. "Nobody in May 1918 had the faintest idea [Spanish flu] would end up killing more people than any other pandemic in human history." The disease seemed at first to be very contagious, but not that dangerous. People treated it "as a bit of a joke". Yet it went on to kill at least 50 million people. In Britain, about 250,000 people died; in China between one and nine million; in India, perhaps 17 million.

It is in the nature of these events that they can only be fully understood in retrospect, said Erik Berglof on Caixin Global (Beijing). But in the meantime, the outbreak is shining a spotlight on Chinese policymakers. They're "not used to this attention, but it is part of China's becoming a global power". Some have suggested that this epidemic may be China's Chernobyl, the crisis that helped bring about the fall of the Soviet regime by laying bare its shortcomings, said Isabella Steger on Quartz (New York). But we've been here many times before. Every time China suffers a calamity – the high-speed train crash in 2011 that left 40 dead; the chemical explosion that killed almost 200 in 2015; the repeated food poisoning and vaccine scandals – experts speculate that it may prove the straw that finally breaks the camel's back. It never is.

What next?

On Wednesday, China reported its smallest daily number of new coronavirus cases since January, raising hopes that the outbreak in that country could be reaching its peak. Global stocks edged higher in response to the report, which lent weight to a prediction the previous day by China's top medical adviser that the outbreak could be over by April. But experts said the risk in China remains great, especially as employees return to work after their extended break, and warned of the virus's spread elsewhere.

All NHS hospitals have been ordered to create secure pods, in isolated parts of their buildings, where people with suspected cases of Covid-19 can be assessed.

What the commentators said

HS2 will "rival the great engineering enterprises of the Victorian era", said Alex Brummer in the Daily Mail. It will create about 50,000 jobs and boost Britain's economic output by £15bn a year, while trains with a top speed of 250mph will slash journey times. Johnson is building a legacy which will "remain on track for generations". The project is absurdly expensive, said Philip Johnston in The Daily Telegraph. France, Japan and Spain have all built high-speed lines for a tenth of HS2's projected cost. In Britain, though, infrastructure schemes are hobbled by woeful management, onerous planning rules, a shortage of engineers and the high price of land. Even so, this one will be worth its massive price tag, transforming Britain for centuries to come. "Let's get on with it and once more exhibit the can-do spirit that seems to have deserted us."

So the "blank cheque on wheels" has the green signal, said Alistair Osborne in The Times. It remains a highly dubious project. Who knows if, by the 2030s, the advent of driverless cars will leave high-speed rail "looking a bit last-century"? Or if it will end up being, like many such lines, prohibitively expensive to run? What we do know is that Johnson has strange ideas about how to invest in northern England. "If economic rebalancing is your thing, who'd start HS2 at the London end?" The North won't get anything for decades. The only guaranteed line is Birmingham to London, "sucking more people into the capital". Johnson must do better than this if he wants to "level up" Britain, agreed Gaby Hinsliff in The Guardian. Northern voters didn't back the Tories for "faster trains to London"; a £5bn package for bus and cycle links, announced alongside HS2, is little consolation. In the meantime, commuters in Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham are stuck with "knackered, overcrowded" trains the Tories have long promised to fix, said Dean Kirby in the I newspaper. If it really wants to win over northern voters, it should promise "long-overdue improvements to their daily commute".

What next?

Building work on the route from London to Birmingham will begin by the end of March, almost a year after it was supposed to start. The 140-mile section, which includes 25 miles of tunnels, is due to be completed between 2028 and 2031.

A new delivery body, called High Speed North, will be created to deliver the second leg of the line, which is subject to a six-month review by the National Infrastructure Commission. Ministers have already conceded, however, that trains on the tracks may be limited to "conventional" speeds of up to 125mph.

THE WEEK

Brexit has been cancelled. Not the historic act of self-harm/longed-for reclamation of national sovereignty (delete according to taste), but the word. It was rumoured last year that the Government would

ban the term after the withdrawal bill passed. And it has. A memo sent to Foreign Office staff last week began: "Brexit is completed. So do not use the term 'Brexit', save as a historical event that took place on 31 January 2020." Other departments received similar notes. The Department for Exiting the European Union has ceased to exist; leading the effort now is a new team, Taskforce Europe, with a non-exity title. This week the Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom, quizzed about the effect of Brexit on Nissan, replied: "We never use that word any more. That was something that happened."

The thinking seems a little Orwellian. By most reckonings, Brexit isn't remotely done, but perhaps if we stop hearing about it, we'll think it's all over. "Do not use phrases such as 'deal/no deal'," the memo goes on. Officials are told to talk about a Canada-style deal, or an Australian-style relationship: these were last known, respectively, as "hard Brexit" and "no deal". Even so, most people probably won't mind being slightly manipulated. The killer insight of Boris Johnson's election campaign was that the nation would be deeply grateful to anyone who promised to disappear the whole issue. The same applies to that horrible word. Whether you're pro-, anti- or bored stiff, just imagine the relief at being able to say: "Brexit? That was something that happened."

Theo Tait

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15 February 2020 THE WEEK

Controversy of the week

Sinn Féin's shock victory

We've grown used to the sight of populist insurgent parties "embarrassing the establishment", said Ross Clark in The Sun. Even so, Sinn Féin's victory in last weekend's general election in Ireland came as a huge surprise. Irish voters had for decades given a wide berth to a party that unashamedly presented itself as the political wing of the Provisional IRA, even as the Provos carried out their "murderous sprees" in Northern Ireland and mainland Britain. Yet on Saturday, exceeding all predictions, Sinn Féin gave a bloody nose to the two centrist parties that have shared power in Dublin since 1921 by winning the largest share of the vote (24.5%). Fianna Fáil received 22.2%; Leo Varadkar's Fine Gael, in government since 2011, trailed in third place with a mere 20.9%. Under Ireland's complex PR system, this has left Sinn Féin with just 37 seats – ahead of Fine Gael on 35, but behind Fianna Fáil on 38 – and it may take weeks before the new parliament's final composition is determined. However, the outcome could well be – for the first time in the Republic's history – that Sinn Féin will form part of its government.



McDonald: giving the party a facelift

Sinn Féin's success was largely due to the way it distanced itself from its paramilitary past after the 2008 financial crisis, reinventing itself as a party of the mainstream left, said Siobhán Fenton in The Guardian. The most telling example of that strategy was the change of leadership two years ago. The party dropped 71-year-old Gerry Adams, a key figure in the Troubles with a Belfast accent – the very epitome of the older generation – and replaced him with Mary Lou McDonald, a 50-year-old Dublin-born mother of two, who studied English at Trinity College Dublin. As it turned out, neither Brexit (which Sinn Féin vociferously opposes) nor Irish unity (which it strongly supports) were big campaign issues, said the FT. Instead, it was the housing crisis and other issues affecting younger people – issues on which Sinn Féin had made the running against the two establishment parties – which preoccupied the electorate. It was no coincidence that 32% of 18- to 24-year-olds (who have little or no memory of the violence) voted for McDonald's party, but just 12% of over-65s.

Her party may have given itself a facelift, said Eoghan Harris in The Irish Independent, but let us not blind ourselves to the fact that this was a shocking outcome. "Sinn Féin is the only European party with an armed wing – marking us out as a rogue democracy." Far from showing contrition, it still celebrates its "squalid terrorist past". And if it does get into government, said Owen Polley on CapX, it will surely take a hard line on Brexit negotiations, and agitate for a referendum on a united Ireland. With Sinn Féin likely to share power on both sides of the border, Ireland must brace itself for a "different and searching national conversation", said Jenny McCartney on UnHerd. For once the election fuss dies down, the questions for Sinn Féin from the grieving relatives of the more than 1,700 people killed by the IRA will resurface. "Memory has a way of knocking to be let back in."

Deportation row

The Government has defended its decision to deport a plane full of foreign-born offenders to Jamaica. Home Secretary Priti Patel said that the people on the flight were guilty of "serious offences", including rape. However, campaigners said some of the offenders had lived in the UK since they were children, had no links with Jamaica, and had committed their crimes years earlier. One of those on the list, Reshawn Davis, had spent two months in jail for robbery ten years ago. He arrived in the UK aged 11. Following a last-minute legal challenge, the plane left with 17 people on board; 25 were removed after the Court of Appeal ruled that they had not had proper access to legal advice owing to an O2 phone mast being down near their detention centres.

Channel crossing record

Border Force agents picked up 102 migrants as they tried to cross the Channel last Friday, a record for a single day. The migrants – who said they were from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Syria – had set off in inflatable boats, in spite of impending Storm Ciara. The day before, 90 people were picked up. Last year, at least 1,892 people successfully crossed the channel in small boats.

Spirit of the age

People have been decorating their homes with fake plastic plants for years; now, gardeners are increasingly opting for them too, reports The Sunday Times. Among the most popular fake outdoor plants are hedges made of spun polyester "leaves". Their attraction, say retailers, is that they take no time to grow; remain verdant all year; and don't need pruning. "Minimal maintenance is key," said Vincent Vity of Just Artificial, a fake foliage "nursery" in Morecambe.

The first state school with boarding facilities for children as young as four is opening in Norfolk, to cater to the growing demand from two-parent working families. Wyndham College Prep School will charge £11,000 a year for accommodation and food.

Good week for:

Personal dignity, after doctors launched a "down with the gown" campaign, urging NHS hospitals to stop asking patients to wear backless robes that leave their bottoms and upper thighs exposed. Professor David Oliver said the gowns, which tie at the back, are often issued for no good reason, and leave patients feeling vulnerable, embarrassed and cold.

Friends fans, with rumours that the six stars of the still popular 1990s sitcom have agreed to reunite for an hour-long special. Reportedly, they will each be paid between \$3m and \$4m.

Radio 3, which celebrated near-record audience figures. Some 2.13 million listeners a week tuned into BBC Radio 3 in the last quarter, up 16% on the previous year.

Tim Steiner, the co-founder of online supermarket Ocado, who was awarded a £54m performance bonus, although losses at the firm are increasing. The award was based on the company's soaring share price. His own shareholding is now worth £300m.

Bad week for:

Peter Phillips, the Queen's eldest grandson, who announced that he is to separate from his Canadian wife, Autumn. The couple have been married for 12 years and have two children.

Mountain rescuers, after 22 of them had to turn out in the middle of a blizzard to find four foreign tourists who'd got stuck on steep ice near the summit of Ben Nevis. Three of the tourists were wearing trainers; they had neither crampons nor ice axes; and appeared not even to have a map. The leader of the Lochaber Mountain Rescue team said they were lucky to be alive.

Poll watch

A majority of Democrat voters in the US state of New Hampshire would rather a giant meteor struck the Earth, extinguishing all human life, than Donald Trump win another term. Asked which outcome they preferred, 38% opted for a Trump victory on 3 November 2020, and 62% for the devastating meteor strike. However, the strength of feeling varied according to income bracket. Among the poorest Democrats (earning under \$50K a year) 69% said they'd rather die in a giant meteor strike than live to see Trump re-elected; but among the richest (earning more than \$100,000 a year) a small majority of New Hampshire Democrats (51%) decided that a Trump win was preferable to the extinction of human life. *The University of Massachusetts*

Europe at a glance

NEWS 7

Berlin

Merkel's heir quits: Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who has led Germany's main governing party, the conservative CDU, since December 2018 – and who was seen as Angela Merkel's anointed successor – dramatically resigned this week. She also said that she won't stand as the party's candidate for chancellor at the next general election, which is due by the autumn of next year.

Merkel said she respected, but greatly regretted her protégée's decision.

Kramp-Karrenbauer (known as AKK) is a Merkel-style centrist, who, since narrowly beating Friedrich Merz, a right-winger, to the leadership, has failed to impose her authority on the CDU. There will now have to be a fresh leadership election, which will define the future direction of a fractious party that has struggled to come to terms with the rise of the far-right AfD. AKK's departure was precipitated by the decision of local CDU politicians in the eastern state of Thuringia to defy her, by taking the highly controversial and unprecedented step of joining forces with the AfD to vote in a pro-business regional premier (who has since resigned). Merkel had denounced the move, which accentuated AKK's lack of authority, as "unforgivable".



Helsinki

Parental leave: Finland is to guarantee new fathers at least 95 working days of paternity leave (equivalent to more than four months off work), a reform aimed at giving all parents the same rights, regardless of gender. Each parent will be given 164 working days of paid parental leave, and can transfer up to 69 of them to their partner. Besides promoting equality, the reform is designed to lower the divorce rate and halt the decline in Finland's fertility rate (at 1.35 births per woman, it's one of the lowest in the world). Effectively, it trebles the father's allowance, giving Finland one of the most generous parental leave systems in Europe, though it is still some way behind Sweden, where each parent can take up to 240 days.

Frankfurt, Germany

Ciara lashes Europe: Storm Ciara, one of the fiercest Atlantic storms to hit northern Europe for many years, claimed at least seven lives on Sunday and Monday across the continent. The violent storm first hit Ireland on Saturday, before lashing much of Britain on Sunday and moving east – causing road and rail chaos, flight cancellations, flooding, structural damage and power outages in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland. The storm – which was variously named Ciara, Sabine or Elsa in different European countries – then headed north to Scandinavia. In the Netherlands, the authorities reported 448 miles of traffic jams on Monday. In Germany, the storm sent a crane crashing down onto the roof of Frankfurt Cathedral and flooded Hamburg's fish market. But the exceptional gales also brought one unexpected benefit to the country, the BBC reported. Wind turbines there produced a record amount of electricity, equivalent to that generated by 44 nuclear power plants.



Madrid

Cardboard box gang busted: Police in Madrid have arrested 42 suspected members of a criminal gang that has been stealing cardboard and paper from council-owned recycling bins and shipping it at vast profit to Asia. The gang is accused of stealing 67,000 tonnes of waste since 2015, and of depriving Madrid city council of €16m in revenues. The police investigation was focused on an ostensibly legitimate Madrid company specialising in waste management. But police say the firm was a front for a criminal network that organised the illegal collection of paper and cardboard across the Spanish capital – and made 278 illegal shipments to processing centres in Asian countries, including China, India, South Korea and Indonesia. Three of those arrested were Spanish citizens and most of the rest were Romanian. The authorities also seized 11 lorries allegedly used in the scam.



Bern

Homophobia law:

Swiss voters have backed a law that extends the country's existing anti-racism laws to cover discrimination and hate speech against gay people. The law was originally

passed in 2018, bringing Switzerland in line with most of western Europe, but right-wing parties opposed it on the grounds it amounted to censorship, and forced a referendum on the issue. In last weekend's vote, 63.1% backed extending the law to cover gay people (though it still does not cover trans people). Switzerland is one of only three western European states (the others being Andorra and Italy) where same-sex marriage remains illegal.

Lesbos, Greece

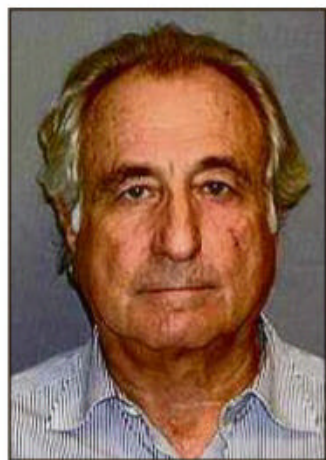
Public health emergency: The UN's refugee agency has called for families and sick people to be urgently evacuated from the Moria refugee camp on Lesbos, as warnings grow of a major public health disaster. The vastly overcrowded camp is a chaotic mass of tents, makeshift shelters, uncollected rubbish, muddy paths and inadequate sanitation. It originally housed 2,300 refugees – mostly from Afghanistan and Syria – but numbers have leapt from 5,000 last summer to around 20,000, with more arriving every day. Hana Pospisilova, a Greek cardiologist and volunteer medic on Lesbos, told The Guardian that the overcrowded conditions are now so dire that they could trigger a global pandemic. She compared conditions at Moria – where, according to her, chronic respiratory problems are widespread – to the beginnings of the Spanish flu outbreak of 1918, which killed tens of millions.

8 NEWS

The world at a glance

Toronto, Canada

Clampdown on Airbnb party houses: The short-term lettings site Airbnb has banned Canadians aged under 25 from renting whole flats or houses in their local area, in the hopes of preventing drunken violence at so-called “party houses”. The ban, which could be extended to other countries if it proves effective, follows a spate of shootings at Airbnb properties in Canada. In the most recent, three people were shot dead – one reportedly by suicide – at a flat in Toronto last Friday. Airbnb is preparing to float on the stock market later this year, with a rumoured target valuation of \$31bn. However, the group’s “record on safety and trust continues to be a dark cloud over the business”, according to the FT. Last month, the firm announced \$150m of new spending on safety initiatives, including 24-hour hotlines for neighbours, and the provision of noise detectors that alert absent owners to disturbances at their properties.

**New York**

Madoff's plea: Bernie Madoff, the mastermind behind one of the biggest financial frauds in history, has asked a court to release him early from his 150-year prison sentence on the grounds that he is terminally ill with kidney disease and has less than 18 months to live. Madoff, 81, was jailed in 2009 for defrauding thousands of investors out of more than \$13bn in a Ponzi scheme. In filing his case in New York last week, his lawyers

cited the Scottish government’s decision to free the Lockerbie bomber, Abdulbaset Ali al-Megrahi, in 2009, after he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, as a case where a man convicted of a terrible crime was released on compassionate grounds.

San Salvador

President enters congress with troops: El Salvador’s president, Nayib Bukele, stunned the country on Sunday by marching armed troops in full combat gear into a session of the assembly, to demand that legislators approve an £85m loan he had requested to fund his security plans. After taking the seat reserved for the congressional president, Bukele began to pray: he said that God had told him to be patient, but that he could dissolve the chamber if they did not approve the loan within seven days. Bukele, 38, who won power last year, enjoys overwhelming popular support, but he does not have a majority in congress. His display of force has caused alarm in a country that has relatively recent experience of military dictatorship and civil war (75,000 people were killed in the war that lasted from 1980 to 1992).

**Washington DC**

President's revenge: Following his Senate acquittal last week, President Trump took revenge on two of the key impeachment witnesses against him – abruptly sacking Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the EU, and Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman, a Ukraine expert on the National Security Council. Sondland had testified to the

House of Representatives that there had been a “quid pro quo” with Ukraine. Vindman had also testified that he had been concerned by Trump’s conduct.

Without explanation, Trump also dismissed Vindman’s twin brother Lieutenant Colonel Yevgeny Vindman, who also worked for the National Security Council. The brothers were both fired on Friday and immediately escorted out of the White House. Trump tweeted that he had sacked Alexander Vindman for being “insubordinate” in complying with a House subpoena to testify. Some analysts argued that Trump had thereby freely confessed to breaking the federal law that protects witnesses from retaliation.

Concord, New Hampshire

Sanders wins: The Vermont senator Bernie Sanders won a narrow victory in the Democratic Party’s New Hampshire primary on Tuesday. Pete Buttigieg came second, while his fellow moderate, the Minnesota senator Amy Klobuchar, surprised many by finishing a strong third. That left the former front-runners Elizabeth Warren and Joe Biden trailing fourth and fifth. Sanders, 78, a veteran left-winger, won 25.8% of the New Hampshire vote, putting him just 1.3 points ahead of Buttigieg, 38, a former mayor of South Bend, Indiana. Last week, Buttigieg claimed a narrow victory in the Iowa caucus, though the figures are still being disputed (*see page 16*). Opinion polls, however, are putting Sanders well in the lead nationally, with Michael Bloomberg in third. The billionaire former New York mayor has sat out the early primaries, and is due to enter the race in time for Super Tuesday on 3 March, when 14 states will vote.

**Brasília**

Mining bill: Brazil’s president, Jair Bolsonaro, has unveiled a bitterly controversial bill that would open up indigenous lands to commercial mining and hydroelectric projects. Bolsonaro argues that allowing more commercial activity to take place in the Amazon region will help tackle poverty, and regards the current protections on indigenous lands (which amount to 13% of Brazil’s total) as an unnecessary hindrance to the exploitation of resources, including gold, diamonds, niobium and rare earths. However, his critics – who include many members of the international investment community – view the protected lands as a crucial buffer against deforestation and as vital to the global battle against climate change.

The world at a glance

NEWS 8
Penza, Russia

Activists “tortured”: A Russian military court has found seven political activists guilty of terrorism offences, and sentenced them to terms of up to 18 years in a penal colony – in a case that has been condemned by rights groups. Prosecutors in the city of Penza claimed the men, who are aged between 23 and 31, had formed a terrorist group called Set, or “Network”. However, they could present no evidence of any of the attacks the so-called network was allegedly planning; instead, the convictions rested largely on confessions, which the defendants say they were tortured into signing. One of them says he confessed after guards started attaching electrodes to his genitals. Amnesty International said the men – all anarchists or anti-fascists – were accused of belonging to a “non-existent ‘terrorist’ organisation”.

Tehran

Reformists purged: Iran’s Guardian Council – a 12-strong body of lawyers and clerics that vets prospective politicians on behalf of the Supreme Leader – has barred more than 90 existing members of Iran’s 290-strong parliament from standing in the country’s general election on 21 February. It has also disqualified about 9,000 of the 16,000 people who applied to stand – the highest proportion since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Reformist candidates in Iran, and Western diplomats, say theocratic hardliners are seeking to create a more pliant parliament, to weaken the centrist President Rouhani and others in the regime who advocate limited engagement with the West. Existing MPs say they have been barred on spurious grounds ranging from financial irregularities to lack of religious fervour.

Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand

Fatal rampage: A Thai soldier shot dead 29 people and injured 57 in a 16-hour rampage in the city of Nakhon Ratchasima last weekend. Jakrapanth Thomma, 32, shot dead his commanding officer, then drove to a nearby mall, where he opened fire indiscriminately, posting Facebook updates as he went along. After a lengthy siege, he was shot dead by police. The motive for the attack is unclear; he is believed to have thought his CO had ripped him off in a property deal.


Seoul

Defector MP: North Korea’s former deputy ambassador to the UK is to stand as a candidate in South Korea’s general election in April – making him the most senior defector from the North to enter politics in Seoul. Thae Yong-ho was based at Pyongyang’s embassy in Ealing, west London, when he defected along with his wife and sons in 2016. Since settling in South Korea, he has become a high-profile and vocal critic of the regime, which has branded him “human scum”.


Dodoma

Reparations: Tanzania has joined Namibia in demanding reparations from Germany for atrocities committed by its colonial-era occupying forces during the first decade of the 20th century. Between 1904 and 1908, German troops killed an estimated 80,000 Herero and Namaqua people in German South West Africa (now Namibia). Germany recognises the killings as a genocide, but although it is one of the biggest donors of aid to Namibia, it has refused to pay “reparations”. In German East Africa (which included what is now Tanzania) up to 300,000 people died during the brutal suppression of the Maji Maji rebellion of 1905. Last week, Tanzania’s ambassador to Germany called for the opening of talks on financial reparations.


Khartoum

Bashir to face justice: Sudan has agreed to hand over its former dictator, Omar al-Bashir, to the International Criminal Court, to face war crimes and genocide charges.

The commitment to send Bashir, 76 – who was ousted last April – to The Hague was made during peace talks between the transitional government and rebel groups from Darfur. The ICC issued two arrest warrants for Bashir in 2009 and 2010. However, it remains unclear how and when he will be handed over. Previously, Sudan had said it wouldn’t extradite him.


Sydney, Australia

Rains arrive: New South Wales has received several days of torrential rain, causing widespread flooding but extinguishing 30 of the bushfires that have ravaged the region in recent months, leaving only four “uncontained”. The Sydney area experienced three times more rain last weekend alone than in an average February; the fire service hopes all remaining fires would be out by the end of this week. But while the southeast of Australia was deluged, new fires raged in parts of Western Australia, which was also struck last weekend by powerful cyclones.

Mr Bercow at home

John Bercow's bellowed demands for "Orderrrr!" are now so famous that people still shout the word at him in the street. But actually, the recently retired Speaker doesn't like "excessive noise", he told Charlotte Edwards in *The Sunday Times*. "So if the kids raise their voices, I will say, 'You are standing right next to each other, you don't have to say it so loudly, you need to learn to modulate your voice.'" But then, he concedes, "You have to be realistic... they inherit your characteristics." The 57-year-old, known for his temper, and plagued by accusations of workplace bullying, admits he doesn't always manage to follow the advice he gives his children. "I've tried to discipline myself because behaviour can be imitative. But do I sometimes flare up and get annoyed and shout? Yes." Is he a bully, though? He says the accusations are "*drivel*" and "*tosh*". "I can get irritated and do now and again lose it... But the idea I am a seething cauldron of irascibility and discontent, and that at any moment I might explode in the family or the workplace is, frankly, rubbish."

From civil war to Congress

Ilhan Omar is fearless, said Rachel Cooke in *The Observer*. In 2018, she became the first African-born American and one of the first two Muslim women to win a seat in the US Congress. Today, she receives a "tremendous amount" of

hate mail, but it doesn't bother her, having lived through much worse, such as civil war in her native Somalia: "I vividly remember the sound of gunshots through concrete walls. I would have been eight. I remember the distinct noise that a rocket makes as it flies over your home. I lived through an invasion of militia men into our home." Her family fled to a Kenyan refugee camp. "I remember what a relief it was to show up there, to receive water and blankets." Later, the camp started feeling like home; "to the point where I protested about leaving". She then had to adapt to the profound shock of moving to America. "Kids like mine can't complain," she says, "because their mothers will always go back to their refugee stories."

A cinematic milestone

Nearly 60 years ago, a 17-year-old Rita Tushingham answered a newspaper ad for an acting job – and ended up starring in *A Taste of Honey*. The 1961 film – in which she plays a white schoolgirl who has a love affair with a black sailor, played by Paul Danquah, and then moves in with a gay man – kick-started her career: she won a Bafta and a Golden Globe. But she really had no idea how revolutionary or scandalous it would be. "We shocked audiences without intending to," she told Stuart Jeffries in *The Guardian*. The film was banned in several countries. "I only learned later that Paul and I did the first interracial kiss on screen."



For a few days last year, Naga Munchetty was "the most scrutinised person in Britain", said Giles Hattersley in *Vogue*. The *BBC Breakfast* presenter was at the centre of an impartiality row after saying that Donald Trump was racist when he said that four ethnic minority US Congresswomen (including Ilhan Omar) should "go back" to their "crime-infested countries". A complaint followed, and she was censured, before the BBC reversed its decision. "It was horrible," she says. "Utter madness." Born in 1975, she is the daughter of a Mauritian-born father and an Indian-born mother, both of whom worked as NHS nurses. For her, racism is personal. "My mum has been told, 'You Paki bitch, get your hands off me,' when she's cleaning someone," she says softly and deliberately. "My dad has been told the same thing. When they're cleaning someone's arse. *A racist person's arse*. They came to a country that wasn't always welcoming to people of colour, to be the best they could be. And they were told to go home all the time." She's also suffered racism first-hand. "I have been told many times 'Why don't you just f*** off to where you came from?' Trust me, when things touch you, sometimes you can't let that go." So she stands by her comments about Trump. "If you saw me sit back – frustrated, angry – it's inevitable when you've had these experiences."

Castaway of the week

This week's edition of Radio 4's Desert Island Discs featured broadcaster and Radio 2 breakfast show host Zoe Ball

- 1 *Where Am I Going?* by Cy Coleman and Dorothy Fields, performed by Barbra Streisand
- 2 *Georgy Porgy (Disco Version)* by David Paich, performed by Toto and Cheryl Lynn
- 3 *Righteous (feat. Roots Manuva & Rodney P)*, written and performed by Ocean Wisdom
- 4 *Shoot You Down* by Ian Brown and John Squire, performed by The Stone Roses
- 5 *Love Having You Around* by Stevie Wonder and Syreeta Wright, performed by First Choice
- 6 *Do I Love You (Indeed I Do)*, written and performed by Frank Wilson
- 7* *Truth*, written and performed by Kamasi Washington
- 8 *You Can't Always Get What You Want* by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, performed by The Rolling Stones

Book: a really big dictionary

Luxury: a potting shed

* Choice if allowed only one record

Viewpoint:**Missing winter**

"There is something depressing about a mild winter. Frosts in the Berkshire countryside have been late this year and gone by lunchtime. Unless something changes soon, the brazen, early growth of trees and flowers will actually be perfectly all right and spring will be here before we know it. The absence of a true season is unsettling to a psychological clock set by weeks of biting frost and bare branches. In my childhood winters, we had to spend half an hour defrosting our toes after morning outings. What is the point of a roaring fire or a hot water bottle now, when the worst natural hazard of the morning is an unusually big puddle?" *Juliet Samuel in The Daily Telegraph*

Farewell

Sir Michael Cummins, The 37th Serjeant at Arms to the House of Commons, died 25 January, aged 80.

Mirella Freni, Italian operatic soprano, died 9 February, aged 84.

Terry Hands, artistic director of the RSC, died 4 February, aged 79.

Lord Sheldon, Labour MP and chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, died 2 February, aged 96.

George Steiner, literary critic and scholar, died 3 February, aged 90.

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Planting trees: a fix for climate change?

In a world looking for solutions to global warming, tree-planting is increasingly taking centre stage

Why is tree-planting so popular?

Trees are the most effective carbon capture machines on the planet. As they grow, they suck earth-warming carbon dioxide out of the air and release oxygen. They lock carbon up in their leaves, branches, trunks and roots: about half of the dry weight of a tree is carbon. Trees also lower air temperatures, increase rainfall, filter out pollutants and dust, and create habitats for wildlife. Ever since it was first established that global warming was a serious problem, tree-planting has been recognised as a simple, cheap and safe tool for mitigating its effects, and there are schemes dating back decades. But over the past year in particular, the idea has caught the attention of a world starved of hopeful climate news.



Planting pine trees in Bolivia on a day of action

What sort of projects are currently under way?

The biggest is the Bonn Challenge, a global effort to restore 350 million hectares of the world's degraded and deforested lands – an area bigger than India – led by the German government and the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Under this and linked schemes, 54 mainly tropical and subtropical nations have committed 172 million hectares so far: Vietnam alone is allowing 15 million hectares to return to natural forest. By 2017, Pakistan had already hit its target of planting a billion trees in Khyber province. China says it has planted 66 billion trees since 1978 (partly to arrest desertification). There is a 5,000-mile wall of trees being built across Africa from Senegal to Djibouti – the Great Green Wall – which aims to be the largest living structure on the planet; it is now 15% complete, with 11.4 million trees planted in Senegal alone. Private and public projects have recently sprung up across the West: Boris Johnson pledged £640m prior to last year's election to fund the planting of 30 million trees a year.

Why has there been a recent surge in interest?

One powerful influence was the study published in the journal *Science* last year, by researchers from ETH Zürich university, that made headlines around the world. The researchers found that some 0.9 billion hectares of land, an area almost the size of the US, was suitable and, in theory, available for planting about a trillion new trees (i.e. it wasn't farmed or built on) – mostly in Russia, the US, Canada, Australia, Brazil and China. When mature, in 50 to 100 years, these trees could theoretically store up to 205 gigatonnes of carbon – about two-thirds of the carbon released by human activities since the Industrial Revolution. "What blows my mind is the scale," said Prof Tom Crowther, who led the research. "I thought restoration would be in the top ten, but it is overwhelmingly more powerful than all of the other climate change solutions proposed."

Did everyone agree with them?

No: the report has since been heavily criticised by other scientists. Crowther and his colleagues were accused of heavily overestimating the carbon storage potential of new forests; of ignoring the carbon already stored

in, for instance, grasslands; and of forgetting about the albedo effect (where snow reflects solar heat from the earth; in planting trees in northern latitudes we could actually reduce this effect, thus warming the planet rather than cooling it). Prof Simon Lewis, a climate change expert at UCL, described the 205 gigatonnes figure as "shockingly bad". The study was accused of using "overly hopeful" figures that might "misguide the development of climate policy".

How could policy be "misguided"?

Climate scientists are concerned that tree-planting could be promoted as a silver bullet: an alternative to cutting emissions. As such, it would be totally inadequate: even 205 gigatonnes only equates to less than ten years of global anthropogenic CO₂

emissions at current rates. And in reality, newly planted trees need to grow for many decades to come close to their carbon storage potential, and there's no guarantee that will happen. Tree-planting can be useless: it was reported two weeks ago that 90% of the 11 million saplings planted last year by Turkey have in fact died. Almost half of the areas pledged under the Bonn Challenge are actually plantations, of non-native commercial species such as eucalyptus for paper or rubber trees, rather than natural forests. These are much poorer at storing carbon, and are harvested at regular intervals, releasing much of their CO₂ back into the atmosphere. Some are even damaging.

How can tree-planting be damaging?

Plantations can destroy natural habitats rather than enhancing them. Commercial forestry often involves using weedkillers and carbon-intensive fertilisers, and planting uniform monocultures – "pines in lines" – using plastic tree guards. In the race to grow trees, invasive species and diseases can be introduced via transplanted saplings. Environmentalists are concerned that some precious habitats – grassland, for instance – are being turned over to woodland. Many think that tree-planting is a bad idea, and that it's better to rewild: to let nature take its course, producing richer habitats. "Tree-planting is not synonymous with conservation; it is an admission that conservation has failed," said the late woodland ecologist Oliver Rackham.

Forests: the global picture

In the 12,000 years since farming began, the number of trees on Earth has fallen by about half; there are about three trillion trees in the world today. Much of this decline is recent: the World Bank estimates that 3.9 million square miles of forest has been lost since 1900. Between 1990 and 2016, 500,000 square miles was cut down, an area larger than South Africa. Even so, forests still cover some 30% of the world's land area. The UN estimated that they absorbed 3.8 gigatonnes of carbon in 2017, about a tenth of total global emissions.

However, while tree cover is declining sharply in some parts of the world, it is growing in others. The UN estimates that about half of the Earth's tropical forests have been cleared, and are still being lost at the rate of about 30,000 square miles per year. At the same time, in other regions, forestry is growing fast. In Russia, for instance, nearly 400,000 square miles of "illegal" forestry has sprung up since state-run collective farms were abandoned at the end of communism. And in Ireland, tree cover – once the lowest in Europe – has grown to around 11%. The problem is that it's tropical forests which provide the best carbon storage. And it's those – in the Amazon, Borneo and the Congo Basin, for instance – which are most under threat.

So what should we do?

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, some 730 gigatonnes of CO₂ will have to be taken out of the atmosphere by the end of the century if we are to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Emissions will have to be cut drastically, and vast amounts of carbon will have to be captured too; forests will play a vital part. Further deforestation will have to be prevented (see box), along with large-scale reforestation. Sensitively-managed reforestation projects which also provide local employment, from new native broad-leaved forests in England to mangrove-planting in Madagascar, have been shown to be greatly beneficial. Planting trees is a necessary step, but it's no panacea.



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Best articles: Britain

NEWS 8

The Coca-Cola method of making money

Ed Conway

The Times

One of the odd things about modern capitalism, says Ed Conway, is the way big companies make their profits. We think it's from selling the things they make, but it rarely is. McDonald's doesn't make money from selling burgers and fizzy drinks, it does so from buying sites and leasing them to franchisees. It's one of the world's biggest property owners. Coca-Cola doesn't earn its profit by bottling and selling Coke, but by selling the right to make it to others – and has far fewer physical assets than we think. And that tends to be the way for today's leading companies. Apple, for instance, doesn't make a single phone itself; it just designs them. Modern airlines don't own their planes; they lease them. The chief asset of the rescued airline Flybe wasn't its planes, but its landing slots at Heathrow – “the equivalent, in aviation terms, of owning a row of houses on Eaton Square”. But new problems arise when the value of companies resides in ideas, branding and goodwill, rather than physical assets. It's not just that intangibles are so much harder to tax. It's that it is also so much harder to work out whether companies are “built on firm foundations or thin air”.

How the Tories have damaged Newcastle

John Harris

The Guardian

We've heard a lot lately about Boris Johnson's government turning on the fiscal taps and calling an end to austerity, says John Harris, but local councils aren't cheering. Pay a visit to Newcastle upon Tyne and you'll see why. The city has been among the hardest hit by years of relentless cuts. Its council has lost some £300m in the past decade in government grants, which has led to the closure of youth clubs, libraries and children's centres, and the neglect of parks and other facilities. And it's not over yet. The council can't do much to increase its own finances: the Tories' proposal to let town halls raise council tax by up to 2%, to cover rising pressures on adult social care, will bring in a “paltry” £2m. And although the Government last year injected £16m into Newcastle's finances, that will be eaten up by the rise in the minimum wage. So the city now has to slash another £20m from its budget and cut deep into its provision for social care. In sum, austerity has not gone away. “Most of what has been closed will not come back; countless instances of need and hardship now feel like they are locked in.”

Net zero emissions? And pigs might fly

Julian Allwood

Financial Times

The UK aviation industry made a bold pledge last week: to cut its net carbon emissions to zero by 2050 while growing by 70%. And if you think that sounds too good to be true, says Julian Allwood, you're right. It ain't going to happen. The idea, enthusiastically endorsed by Boris Johnson, that we'll have switched to electric planes by then, is a pipe dream. True, planes powered by solar cells have already been used for short-hop flights; but it'll be many decades before this technology can be used for long-haul ones. A switch to alternative fuels such as hydrogen or synthetic kerosene is equally unrealistic: these are electricity-dependent, and given the slow rate at which green sources are supplanting fossil fuels (today they supply just 15% of global primary energy consumption), all the available clean electricity will be needed to power vehicles, heating and industry. There won't be enough to spare for planes. Nor will planting trees or any other form of carbon capture be anything like enough to offset the rise in emissions. So forget these pie-in-the-sky targets: the only way to get net zero emissions is to start preparing for a world where people don't fly at all.

The knotweed that is choking Hollywood

Julie Burchill

The Daily Telegraph

One thing struck me on reading the obituaries of Kirk Douglas (*see page 47*), says Julie Burchill: he'd never have made it in showbiz today. His parents were poor Russian immigrants and he didn't have any connections. Back then, however, you didn't need them: “the ragman's son could become Spartacus, and the madwoman's illegitimate daughter Marilyn Monroe. A new name and you were good to go.” But today nepotism has spread across the trade “like Japanese knotweed”. Gwyneth Paltrow, Sean Penn, Angelina Jolie, Scarlett Johansson, Douglas's own son, Michael – to name a few – have followed their parents. And the more the creative industries have become dominated by the privileged classes, the blander popular culture has grown. Compare Joaquin Phoenix's “woke blather” at the Bafta Awards with the daring way Kirk Douglas helped break the blacklist system by getting a communist screenwriter to adapt the *Spartacus* script. “To be left-wing in Hollywood then truly was brave; now it's the new conformity, ticking the diversity box while keeping it all in the family.”

IT MUST BE TRUE... I read it in the tabloids

An art critic apologised after accidentally shattering a £15,000 glass installation at a prestigious Mexican art fair. Avelina Lésper placed an empty drinks can near the artwork, by Mexican artist Gabriel Rico, to register her disapproval of it. But the work, a large pane of glass with objects including a football and a feather suspended inside it, then smashed into pieces on the floor. Lésper apologised, adding: “It was like the work heard my comment and had felt what I thought of it.”



A water-skiing squirrel is facing investigation for breaching a Vancouver by-law. Twiggy, who has its own life jacket and tours boat shows to educate crowds on water safety, was due to perform in the city. But officials have now launched a probe into whether the appearances violate a law preventing the use of rodents in exhibitions or competitions. Breaches are punishable by fines of CA\$10,000 (£5,800).

A man who was rescued after trying to walk across the frozen Mississippi River blamed the mishap on Google Maps. He was pulled from the river in Minneapolis in the early hours of Saturday; he claimed the app had told him to cross the river, though it seems likely that it wanted him to use the bridge. He suffered a mild case of hypothermia.

A pensioner from Aintree has been jailed for 24 weeks for blasting Classic FM from his house. Ian Trainer tormented neighbours by playing music at “unbelievable” volumes for several years. Quizzed by police, he said: “I like playing music at a level I enjoy.”

The fiscal lies Republicans love to spread

Jordan Weissmann

Slate

America's federal deficit – that is, its annual overspend, as opposed to its total national debt – is expected to pass \$1trn this year, says Jordan Weissmann. Is that something to worry about? Personally, I don't think so. Although some fret that the country is heading for a “fiscal catastrophe”, today's low interest rates, and the dollar's status as the world's reserve currency, mean the US is more than capable of sustaining these high levels of debt for the foreseeable future. But even those Americans who don't think this debt is a problem are entitled to be “furious” about the “political hypocrisy” that lies behind it. After the 2008 credit crunch, Republicans spent years “fearmongering” about the deficit, successfully pressuring the Democrats into imposing austerity measures that held back the country's economic recovery. Yet the minute their party returned to power, they turned on the spending taps and passed a “massive deficit-financed tax cut for the wealthy”. It's totally shameless. Just you watch: as soon as a Democrat gets back into the White House, the Republicans will “rediscover their old-time faith in fiscal prudence and start shrieking again about how the US is on the road to becoming Argentina or Zimbabwe”.

All praise to the brave senator from Utah

Jennifer Rubin

The Washington Post

All credit to Mitt Romney, says Jennifer Rubin. While every other Republican senator embarrassed themselves last week with “transparently ridiculous excuses” for acquitting Donald Trump in his impeachment trial, the member for Utah alone stood up for the truth, becoming the “only person in history to vote to remove a president of his own party”. In an eloquent speech, he made clear why he felt he had no choice. By secretly pressuring a foreign government to investigate a political rival, said Romney, Trump had sought to “corrupt an election to maintain power”. That was a clear abuse of his position – and one that Congress was obliged to hold him to account for. “The Constitution doesn't say that if the president did something terribly wrong, let the people decide in the next election what should happen,” he continued. “It says... the Senate shall try him.” Hats off to Romney for taking this stand, which will earn him all sorts of grief from Trump supporters. He may have failed to win the presidency in 2012, but with this “singular act of integrity”, he has earned himself an honourable mention “in history”.



Romney: a “singular act of integrity”

The living hell of traffic in our cities

Nicole Gelinas

New York Post

The recent death of Kobe Bryant in a helicopter crash wasn't just a tragedy for his family and for basketball fans, says Nicole Gelinas. It was also “a sign of the times”: that even the rich and famous now can't avoid “the traffic hellscape that American cities have created for their residents”. Like everyone else in southern California, Bryant was sick of the permanent motorway gridlock that degrades the quality of life there. The average Los Angeles commuter spends 119 hours – about three full work weeks – stuck in traffic each year. And it's not just LA; the problem is getting worse everywhere. Across the US, the average commuter wastes 54 hours a year in traffic, up from 20 hours in 1982. Funding for mass transit just hasn't kept up with population growth. This is why the wealthy, and even the not so wealthy, are increasingly turning to small planes or shelling out \$200 for a seat on a chopper to get around. This in turn is leading to dangerously congested airspace over cities – a factor that led air traffic controllers to put Bryant's helicopter in a holding pattern just before it crashed. Last year, LA police recorded 236 deaths as a result of traffic accidents on the city's overcrowded roads; both they and Bryant are “victims of failing public infrastructure”.

How the Democrats made fools of themselves in Iowa

“Want to cause countrywide confusion and sow doubt in the integrity of democracy?” Well, it turns out there's an app for that, said Molly Roberts in *The Washington Post*. It's the software that effectively sabotaged last week's Iowa caucuses. All eyes were on the small state as, in keeping with tradition, it held the first contest of the nominating season that will decide the two parties' presidential candidates. Yet the event turned into a fiasco after “major app problems” prevented Democratic organisers from logging the results of the 1,678 caucuses being held in meeting rooms across the state. It took the best part of a week for the full result to be established. The debacle turned the Democrats into a laughing stock, and prompted many mischievous conspiracy theories. “Mark my words, they are rigging this thing,” remarked the president's son, Eric.

The Iowa caucuses are “one of the last great anachronisms of American politics”, said Andrew Ferguson in *The Atlantic*. Carried out over several hours and involving much furious debate and horse-trading among disproportionately white, rural activists, the convoluted meetings are an eccentric way of launching the primary season at the best of times. Ironically, last week's meltdown happened because the state was trying

to modernise its system. Let's hope the Iowa caucuses are now consigned to oblivion, said Jack Shafer on *Politico*. Candidates have never liked having to trudge around the wintry state. Nor have reporters, though they've felt duty-bound to hype up the significance of this first contest. Only Iowans enjoy the process, “but that's because it bathes them in flattering attention”.

Last week's fiasco exemplifies so much about the American situation right now, said Ross Douthat in *The New York Times*: the “self-sabotage of our institutions”, the disastrous combination of “creaking political systems” and new-fangled technology. The biggest loser from the botched count was Pete Buttigieg, who ultimately won the contest but was deprived of the “headlines and momentum” that a clear-cut victory would have delivered. Sadly for the Democrats, there's nothing clear-cut about this primary season, said John Podhoretz in the *New York Post*. They're hopelessly stuck between Bernie Sanders, who enthuses young progressives; Buttigieg, who enthuses young moderates; Joe Biden, who does well with older and African-American voters; and Michael Bloomberg, who has limitless financial resources. The chaos on the horizon could make the Iowa mess look like a “garden party”.

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Syria faces catastrophe as the world watches on

Even by the cruel standards of this long civil war, Syria's latest humanitarian catastrophe is devastating, said Moritz Baumsteiger and Dunja Ramadan in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich). Backed by Russian forces, President Assad has in the past three weeks unleashed a horrifying new onslaught on the province of Idlib in the northwest of the country, where rebel forces are making a final stand. Hospitals and markets have all been targeted as Assad tries to bring "every inch" of the country back under his control:

"It is raining bombs." More than half a million people have fled the area since December, some burning their homes rather than leave them to be looted. At least 180 civilians have been killed this year. Russia, along with China, even vetoed a UN Security Council resolution in December that would have allowed aid to reach the region.

Syria's war has now dragged on for almost nine years, and about 13 million people have been forced to flee their homes. So this latest wave of refugees – of whom 80% are women and children – is a "disturbingly familiar sight", said Sam Hamad in *The New Arab* (London). Assad is deliberately driving Syria's Sunni population, who he sees as instigators of the rebellion, out of the country. It is high time we started calling this what it



Assad's onslaught devastated Sarmin, in Idlib province

is: "ethnic cleansing", pure and simple. Many of those displaced are heading towards Turkey – but they won't stop there, said Burhanettin Duran in *Daily Sabah* (Istanbul). Assad and President Putin quite clearly aim to unleash an influx of refugees to destabilise Europe, as in 2015. If the West fails to help, Europe will face "major setbacks".

The Idlib offensive is straining relations between Russia and Turkey, said Anthony Samrani in *L'Orient-Le Jour* (Beirut). Although they back opposing sides, the two countries share a wider alliance and a mutual hostility to the

West; President Erdogan recently angered his Nato partners by buying Russian S-400 missile systems. But Erdogan's tone has sharpened in a fortnight in which 13 Turkish military personnel were killed in strikes by Syrian forces; he partly blames Russia, with which he had negotiated a truce. He was resigned to part of Idlib falling, but if Assad's forces achieve a total victory, it would deprive Erdogan of the chance to relocate some of the 3.6 million refugees in Turkey to Syria. Meanwhile, the killing continues, said Waad al-Kateab in *The New York Times*. Idlib was a "sanctuary" for refugees from devastated cities such as Aleppo; now, they face relentless attacks as the West watches in silence. We Syrians have been left "to face death alone".

GERMANY

Luther's anti-Semitic hangover

Neue Zürcher Zeitung

Wittenberg's Stadtkirche is one of Germany's most historically significant churches; the Protestant reformer Martin Luther preached there, and it was the site of the first celebration of mass in German rather than Latin. But for seven centuries it has been adorned with a relief showing a "Judensau" (Jew sow), says Marc Felix Serrao. It's a hateful anti-Semitic image – showing a rabbi looking up the backside of a sow for God's true name, as Jews suck at the teats. While dozens of these medieval images survive in German churches, Wittenberg's is notorious. And now, a court has rejected a Jewish pensioner's petition for it to be removed because of its "obvious" offence. The judge agreed that it is a "contemptible" image, but said that notices at the site place it in context and distance the church from persecution of Jews and Luther's anti-Semitic rhetoric. The church's pastor also said that a cedar tree had been planted nearby as "a sign of peace". So: a small information plate and a tree. Are these plausible correctives to this hateful image? I think not. If we are to keep such bigoted relics in our public spaces, they must be clearly labelled and explained in all their "hideous" detail.

INDIA

A novel fix for the menace of honking

The Times of India (Mumbai)

Driving on India's "precarious" roads can induce extreme stress, says Nitasha Natu. Motorists in cities must constantly be on alert in a melee of bicycles, rickshaws, buses and taxis. But what's especially appalling is the noise; drivers constantly sound their horns while stuck in traffic, even as they wait at red traffic lights. But now, police in Mumbai think they have found a solution to the "menace of needless honking": punishing noisy drivers by making them wait even longer. In a trial at five busy intersections, they rigged up decibel meters to traffic lights, which stayed red for a further 90 seconds whenever the noise level topped 85 decibels. And police now plan to extend the scheme to other bottlenecks. Drivers are being forced to "learn the hard way that honking is not the way out". Campaigners have long begged authorities to clamp down on the problem, but previous efforts weren't followed up; on a single day in 2008 police fined 16,000 drivers for needless beeping – one police chief even booked his own driver – but in the following ten years, fewer than 2,000 people were fined. Critics say the new plan merely attacks the symptoms while failing to tackle congestion, the root cause. But any measure aiming to address the scourge of honking is surely worth trying.

THE NETHERLANDS

On closer inspection, you're a liar

De Volkskrant (Amsterdam)

Dutch nationalists are at it again, says Raoul du Pré. The latest proponent of an "unadulterated racist agenda" is Thierry Baudet, leader of the far-right Forum for Democracy party. On social media, he claimed two of his female friends had been "harassed by four Moroccans" on board a train. Appealing to his "childishly naive" compatriots to end "politically correct nonsense", he urged voters to back his party in order to "save this country". The problem was, the story wasn't true; the rail company clarified that three of the men involved in the incident were actually plain-clothes ticket inspectors. The fourth, meanwhile, was a police officer who'd been called over by the inspectors to help when the women refused to show their tickets. Several days later, Baudet admitted that he'd been too quick to link the confrontation to mass immigration. But this "half-hearted" apology shouldn't get him off the hook. He is guilty of an "eager, wilful" attempt to blame an entire ethnic community for an imagined offence, finishing it off with a plea for votes. He now faces a police investigation for the false claim. But, following his party's shock success in last year's local elections, the electorate must send a "clear message"; this type of behaviour has no place in the Netherlands.

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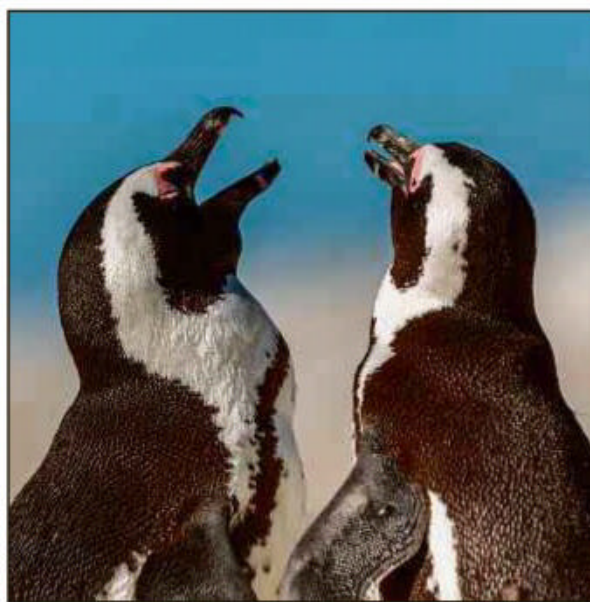
What the scientists are saying...

Smokers' lungs can heal

Lungs have an almost “magical” ability to heal the damage caused by smoking – but only if you stop, a study suggests. The findings, published in *Nature*, add to the evidence that it is never too late to give up smoking: it appears that as well as preventing further damage from occurring, quitting allows the lungs to “regenerate”, significantly reducing the risk of cancer. For the study, researchers from the UK and Japan analysed lung biopsies on 16 people, including smokers, former smokers and adults who'd never smoked. As expected, the lung cells of current smokers showed far more mutations (including potentially cancer-causing ones) than those of non-smokers. While the lung cells of former smokers also exhibited more mutations than normal, up to 40% of their cells had no signs of damage at all – four times the rate in current smokers. The scientists suspect that these healthy cells are descended from stem cells that are dormant while the person still smokes, enabling them to evade damage. “Once the person quits smoking, the cells gradually proliferate from this safe harbour to replace the damaged cells,” said Dr Peter Campbell of the Wellcome Sanger Institute.

Penguins keep it brief

The honking breeding calls of “jackass” penguins share some basic traits of human speech, scientists have discovered. In all human languages, the more often a word is used, the shorter it tends to be. (In English, “the” and “to” are examples.) A separate “law” states that cumbersome words like “onomatopoeia” tend to be made up of short syllables. While these principles are known to apply to the “speech” of primates, they have never previously



Jackass penguins: linguistic conformists

been observed in birds. But when researchers analysed the calls of three colonies of African penguins in Italian zoos – known as jackass penguins on account of their braying – they found that their most common sounds were also the shortest, and that the longer their calls lasted, the more short sounds they contained. “This is the first compelling evidence for conformity to linguistic laws in vocal sequences of a non-primate species,” the scientists wrote in *Biology Letters*.

How to prevent miscarriages

The hormone progesterone should be given to any pregnant woman who has suffered more than one unexplained miscarriage, scientists have claimed. The hormone, secreted by the ovaries just after ovulation, helps maintain the lining of the uterus and protects the placenta during pregnancy. While it has often been suggested that women who suffer recurrent miscarriages would benefit from boosting their

progesterone levels, evidence for the practice has been deemed inconclusive. Now a University of Birmingham study claims to show for the first time that it really can reduce the risk of miscarriage. The researchers analysed two recent UK clinical trials, one looking at women with a history of unexplained recurrent miscarriages, and the other at those who'd experienced early pregnancy bleeding. In the first trial, women given progesterone had a 3% higher live birth rate than those who were given a placebo; in the second, the figure was 5%. The report, in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, estimates that if every high-risk woman in the UK was given two daily doses of progesterone, it would lead to “an additional 8,450 live births per year”.

Can tea help stop Alzheimer's?

Drinking at least one and a half cups of tea a day could reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's. Flavonols are a group of compounds found in plant-based foods including tea, red wine and cocoa, and it has long been thought that they promote cardiovascular health. Now a study suggests that they also help “stave off” dementia. Researchers at Rush University in Chicago tracked 921 people with an average age of 81, dividing them into five groups, or “quintiles”, based on their consumption of flavonols. Those in the highest quintile, who consumed more than 15.3mg a day (equivalent to one and a half cups of tea), had a 48% lower rate of Alzheimer's disease compared with the lowest, who consumed under 5.3mg. Of four types of flavonol considered by the researchers, one called kaempferol appeared to be most beneficial: it is found in tea, kale, beans, spinach and broccoli.

Playing it by ear

Rachmaninoff: most innovative composer

The music of Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), a giant of the late romantic period, isn't generally considered very daring. But according to scientists in South Korea, he may be the most innovative composer ever, beating titans such as Bach and Mozart. The team built a computer model that analysed “novelty” from previous works and “influence” on subsequent ones. When applied to piano pieces by 19 composers from the baroque, classical and romantic periods, it found that Rachmaninoff broke most ground, followed by Bach, Brahms and Mendelssohn. Prof Juyong Park, of the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, said the Russian's achievement was all the more impressive given that, as a late romantic, he had “more older material” to be “different from”.



Rachmaninoff: broke new ground

Beethoven: not entirely deaf?

If there is one fact everyone knows about Beethoven, it is that he composed some of his most famous works while “completely deaf”, says *The Observer*. Not so, new evidence suggests. Theodore Albrecht, a musicologist at Kent State University, Ohio, has found numerous contemporary accounts suggesting that Beethoven retained some ability to hear, right up to 1826 – two years after the famous premiere of his Ninth Symphony. “This is going to send everybody scurrying to revise biographical concepts about Beethoven,” said Albrecht.

A new peak for global consumption

The amount of material consumed by humanity has passed 100 billion tonnes per year for the first time. A report by the Circle Economy think tank found that in 2017 (the latest year for which data is available), humanity consumed 100.6 billion tonnes of material. Nearly half this total was the sand, clay, gravel and cement used for building; coal, oil and gas made up 15% and metal ores 10%; most of the remainder were plants and trees used for food and fuel. Since 1970, the materials consumed by humanity have quadrupled, while the world's population has only doubled. Meanwhile, the proportion of materials being recycled is actually falling, down from 9.1% in 2015 to 8.6% in 2017. “Our hunger for virgin materials needs to be halted,” said Marc de Wit, the report's lead author.

NEWS

Talking points

Pick of the week's
Gossip

The late comedy actress **June Whitfield** was delighted when a rose was named in her honour. But as a reader of *The Oldie* recalled in a letter, what gave her particular pleasure was its write-up in a garden catalogue. "June Whitfield is superb for bedding," it said, "but best up against a wall."



A spider-shaped brooch worn by **Baroness Hale** as she declared **Boris Johnson's** prorogation of Parliament illegal last year saw her praised as a fashion icon. *Vogue* lauded the brooch as "maximalist perfection", and online searches for animal-shaped brooches soared 126%. Now she has revealed where she got the prized accessory. It was, she says, a gift from her husband, who bought it for the princely sum of £12. "He thinks he got it from *Cards Galore*."

If you live in London, **Rory Stewart** wants to sleep with you. The independent mayoral candidate has launched a campaign called *Come Kip With Me* – in which he asks the capital's residents to let him stay the night. In an accompanying video, he admits that the request is a bit "weird", but says it is "the way mayors get to know their cities". Stewart claims to have already bedded down with Lorraine from *Newham*, and an unnamed young man in *Streatham*, and to be eager for more sleepovers: "Please have me to stay with your family, or just in your home, seeing your borough," he says. "Promise to bring a sleeping bag. And a box of chocolates."

The SNP: a scandal too far?

As he prepared his budget statement last Tuesday night, Derek Mackay must have felt confident about his future in Scottish politics. At 42, the finance minister was regarded as a shoo-in to follow Nicola Sturgeon as leader of the SNP, and a possible future First Minister. Yet "less than 24 hours later, Mackay was gone", said Alan Cochrane in *The Daily Telegraph* – "forced to resign in ignominy" after being confronted by the revelation that he'd been sending "suggestive" text messages to a 16-year-old boy he'd never met. Mackay had bombarded the boy with 270 messages, in which he'd complimented him on his looks (calling him "really cute") and invited him to a reception at Holyrood. With police looking into whether a crime has been committed, Mackay will be lucky to keep his seat. But the scandal won't just affect him: it could have major ramifications for the SNP and, by extension, the future of the Union.



Mackay: resigned in ignominy

Mackay's disgrace could "hardly have come at a worse time" for Sturgeon, said Alex Massie in *The Sunday Times*. Next month, Alex Salmond, her predecessor, goes on trial on serious sexual assault charges. And the list of woes afflicting her government is a long one. Scotland's schools have slipped down the international rankings; its rate of drug deaths is the worst in the developed

world; its A&E waiting times have hit a record high; and the CalMac ferry contract fiasco continues – the boats are now more than £100m over budget and two years late. Put all of this together and there is a real sense that the government has run its course. But that doesn't mean it will lose next year's election. Neither Labour nor the Tories are in a position to make much headway in the firmly Remain country; and in any case, for a large swathe of Scottish voters, the independence cause is so vital, they'll keep voting SNP, regardless of its poor performance in office.

But for the Nats, there is a problem, said *The Guardian*: Sturgeon knows that any move to independence must be indisputably legal if Scotland is to have a hope of re-entering the EU – and Boris Johnson has ruled out a second referendum. She hopes that a big SNP win next year will force him into a U-turn, but for a party that is tired after 13 years in office, the long game is risky. But so is pushing for an early referendum, said Gerald Warner on *Reaction*. Having left the EU, with no guarantee of re-admission, there's a very good chance Scots would balk at crashing out of the UK too. They "enjoy twisting the British lion's tail", but now, more than ever, they will be asking themselves "what kind of people are governing them".

Electric cars: a cleaner, greener future?

The writing's on the wall for the internal combustion engine, said Jack McKeown in *The Courier* (Dundee). On 4 February, the Government announced that sales of all new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars would be banned from 2035 – five years earlier than planned. This deadline is still some way off and, since it will only apply to new sales, it won't transform things overnight. "A diesel car bought in 2033 might well run into the 2050s." But make no mistake: we're facing a "sea change in how we power our cars". I'm a big fan of electric cars, said Rob Lyons on *Spiked*, but this ban feels too hasty. How is everyone going to charge their car when there are still so few public charging points around, and when many people lack drives or parking spaces where they can plug in their own lead? Where is the country going to find the huge amounts of power that will be needed to charge all these vehicles overnight?

It's not even clear whether the reform will help the environment, said Nick Rufford in *The Sunday Times*. Electric cars, after all, are only as green as the electricity that charges them, and half of our power is currently generated from burning coal, oil and gas. Then you have to take account of all the carbon generated by manufacturing these vehicles – in particular their batteries, which require the extensive mining of

lithium and cobalt. VW estimates that it takes almost 77,000 miles of motoring before an electric Golf has less impact on the environment than a diesel-powered one. The Government may come to regret this move. The French *gilets jaunes* protests, sparked by a planned hike in fuel taxes, show that drivers "are slow to be riled, but a powerful lobby once they are".

I seriously doubt that anyone shopping for a car in 2035 is going to be unhappy about not being able to buy a petrol one, said Ed Wiseman in *The Daily Telegraph*. When you consider how far electric cars have come – from the "hilariously rubbish G-Wiz" 15 years ago to the 155mph Porsche Taycan today – it's clear where things are going. Electric cars are the future, agreed Hamish McRae in *The Mail on Sunday*. They free cities from exhaust pipe fumes and, with fewer moving parts than petrol or diesel vehicles, are easier to manufacture and cheaper to run. But it's a mistake all the same simply to issue a blanket ban on non-electric vehicles, including the plug-in hybrids that, for many people, provide a useful transition to pure electric cars. The world needs to move towards a lower-carbon economy, but we'll benefit from doing so in an "orderly way that is driven by economic sense. Not because we are told to by some here today, gone tomorrow politician."

Talking points

NEWS 3

Fishing policy: the next Brexit battle

“There could be troubled waters ahead,” said Chris Morris on BBC News. Fishing has “always been an emotional issue in the UK’s relationship with the EU” – and as the two sides last week set out competing visions of a future trade relationship, it became clear the subject would once again become a key battleground. Michel Barnier, the EU’s chief negotiator, said that if Britain wants a close free-trade agreement, with no tariffs or quotas, it will have to give the EU fishing fleet the same level of access to British waters that it now enjoys. But in an uncompromising speech at the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, Boris Johnson dismissed that outright. At present, more than 60% of the fish landed in British waters go to foreign boats. Any future trade agreement, he said, must be based on the understanding that “British fishing grounds are first and foremost for British boats”.

The Government’s plan to “take back control” of UK waters has been welcomed by much of the industry, said Barney White-Spunner in *The Daily Telegraph*. Its new Fisheries bill is designed to consign the EU’s Common Fisheries Policy to history, and to usher in “changes that some British fishermen have desired since the 1970s”. Reallocating the quotas that EU vessels



The PM: going to war over fish?

enjoy, which are widely regarded as very unfair, has become “something of a holy grail of the Brexit campaign”. But we need to tread carefully. Brussels will “fight fire with fire”, and it could easily impose import tariffs that would, for instance, “cripple” our entire fish-processing industry.

The Prime Minister’s hard line may please the “larger-scale, rich, noisy part” of the fishing industry, said John Lichfield in *The Guardian* – but not everyone will be better off. On the contrary, much of the UK industry – “broadly the small-scale, ecologically sound part” – depends on frictionless overnight trade with the EU. Two-thirds of British shellfish and crustaceans are sold to the continent – an arrangement that only works because of the EU single market. The best hope now is that these are opening positions, and that common sense, self-interest and international law will force a compromise, similar to that which Norway has negotiated with the EU. That would be awkward for Johnson, after his tough talk – but it would have benefits for other industries, “from car-making to pharmaceuticals to farming”, which are sure to lose out if he goes to war over fish. A bare-bones trade deal would not only “sink a large part of Britain’s fishing fleet”, it would also badly hurt British farmers and factories.

Phillip Schofield: coming out on TV

In 1985, the year Phillip Schofield made his debut on British TV, *The Sun* reported that a Liverpool publican had banned gay people from his premises, explaining that he didn’t want his customers to “catch something from the glasses”. In 1988, the UK government passed Clause 28, which banned schools from teaching children about “the acceptability of homosexuality”. All of which, said Esther Addley in *The Guardian*, perhaps goes some way to explaining why Schofield only came out at the age of 57. Last Friday, looking tearful and “agonised”, he took to his own sofa on ITV’s *This Morning* to tell the world that he was gay. The reaction – in the studio, in the media and on social media – was “overwhelmingly positive”, heartening evidence of how much attitudes have changed since his career began. Touchingly, his wife of 27 years, Stephanie Lowe, and his two grown-up children, praised him for “taking this brave step”.

“Until last week, I barely knew who Phillip Schofield was,” said Simon Kelner in the *I* newspaper. Now, a few days later, I know all sorts of things about his life, his family, and the



Schofield with his wife

sexual preferences that he has kept to himself for decades. “Do I, do we, need to know all this?” Should coming out as gay still be treated as such a big deal, as some kind of “confession”? It’s absurd, said Brendan O’Neill on *Spiked*. “Brave used to mean going to war. Or risking life and limb for your political beliefs.” Now it seems to mean using your position on daytime TV to tell everyone you’re gay. Schofield’s discovery of his “authentic self” is apparently a matter for great celebration, even though it means “the collapse” of his marriage.

Comments like these show no understanding at all of how debilitating and guilt-ridden life in the closet can be, said Justin Myers in the *I* newspaper. Of course coming out is “a big deal”; of course it matters. It’s simply not true that “nobody cares”. The day that gay and lesbian people no longer “face abuse just for being who they are is the day it no longer matters. Until then, coming out is important.” Schofield’s declaration “will change minds, open up discussion, shine light in darker corners” – and it should be applauded.

Wit & Wisdom

“I am not the kind of person women fall in love with. I sort of grow on them, like a fungus.”

Jeff Bezos, quoted in The Daily Telegraph

“I do not believe that friends are necessarily the people you like best; they are merely the people who got there first.”

Peter Ustinov, quoted in Forbes

“Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent.”
Isaac Asimov, quoted in The New York Times

“It serves me right for putting all my eggs in one bastard.”
Dorothy Parker on her divorce, quoted in The Times

“The mob is by nature innocent: it washes its own conscience in a flow of collective indignation.”
Roger Scruton on UnHerd

“There is hardly an American citizen above the poverty level whose tax conscience is so completely clear that he isn’t scared of being audited.”
Anonymous tax official, quoted in Forbes

“There is a coherent plan in the universe, though I don’t know what it’s a plan for.”
Fred Hoyle, quoted in the I newspaper

“Good taste is death. Vulgarity is life.”
Mary Quant, quoted in The Guardian

“The first principle is that you must not fool yourself – and you are the easiest person to fool.”
Physicist Richard Feynman, quoted in The New York Times

Statistic of the week

Apple shipped an estimated 30.7 million watches last year, 36% more than the year before – and more than the entire Swiss watch industry combined, which shipped 21.1 million units, down 13% on 2018.

Strategy Analytics/The Times

Six Nations: the ugliest win?

Was England's Six Nations victory over Scotland the worst rugby match of all time, asked Owen Slot in *The Times*. Well, it's certainly hard to remember a wetter game – or a windier one, for that matter. It didn't matter what the players did in Edinburgh – “the wind could take anything anywhere”. Owen Farrell tried kicking goals; that didn't work. Nor did George Ford's attempt at a drop-goal, or Scotland “hammering away at the line”. But in these “most stressful of conditions”, England ultimately had the edge, with a try from Ellis Genge sealing their 13-6 win.

This was certainly one of the ugliest victories in recent memory, said Nick Evans in *The Guardian*. But Eddie Jones and his men will not “care in the slightest”. After five defeats in their previous seven Six Nations away ties, including to France the previous weekend, they were desperate for a good result. The key to their victory was their supremacy in the middle third of the field – “and a lot of that was down to the work they did at the breakdown”, where they had come off second-best in their defeat to Scotland two years ago. By adding Lewis Ludlam at blindside flanker and the outstanding Tom Curry at No. 8, Jones had three players who are at heart openside flankers, instead of just one. As a result, they were able to “force Scotland to play from deep and feed off the turnovers”. Still, on the whole England performed little better than they had in Paris, said Stephen Jones in *The Sunday Times*. Jones has retained too many players from the World Cup: this side is starting to look a little stale. England may be marching on, but they are “hardly high-stepping”. At least they're still in with an outside chance of winning this



Curry: outstanding

tournament, said Mark Palmer in the same paper. Two games in, Scotland's campaign “already looks perilously close to a dead end”. Time is surely up for their head coach, Gregor Townsend, unless they “produce something special” very soon.

The Six Nations has always been a form of “winter entertainment”, said Brian Moore in *The Daily Telegraph*. But watching this match unfold in “almost unplayable conditions”, it was clear that the tournament would benefit from being moved to the summer. “Good-weather rugby: surely better for players and spectators alike?” Don't hold your breath, said Nik Simon in the *Daily Mail*. But a bigger change could be on the way. Until now, the competition has only featured European teams; but South Africa, the world champions, are on course to join it from 2024, turning the Six Nations into the Seven Nations. If that really does happen, it will “radically alter the international rugby landscape”.

Sporting headlines

Six Nations Ireland beat Wales 24-14. France scored five tries in their 35-22 win over Italy. In the Women's Six Nations, England beat Scotland 53-0.

Football In the Premier League, newly promoted Sheffield United beat Bournemouth 2-1 to go fifth.

Golf Rory McIlroy returned to the top of the world rankings for the first time since 2015, leapfrogging Brooks Koepka.

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Cricket: old hands give England the edge

“Welcome back, then, England,” said Barney Ronay in *The Guardian*. “Just about.” In their first one-day international (ODI) against South Africa, they had looked badly out of sorts, and suffered a heavy defeat. Once the second ODI was rained off, it meant they had to win the third and final match in Johannesburg to avoid their first series defeat in three years. Sure enough they did it, winning by two wickets to draw the series 1-1 – yet this was still a “slightly torturous performance” from a team that won the World Cup just seven months ago.

If these players didn’t look like world champions, that’s because many of them aren’t, said Chris Stocks in *The Times*. Two of the heroes last summer, Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler, were rested for this series; Jofra Archer was injured. The priority wasn’t so much winning the third ODI as “learning whether the new players could cut it” – and Tom Banton, a 21-year-old batsman, and Saqib Mahmood, a 22-year-old fast bowler, both looked promising. Yet the best thing



Rashid: a three-wicket haul

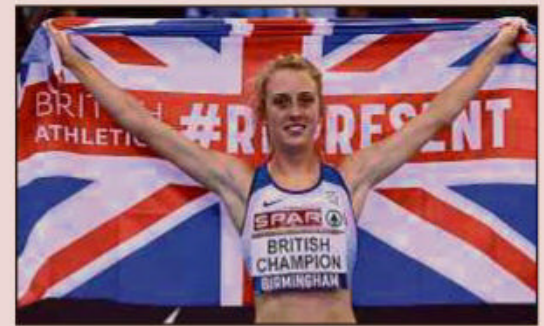
about this victory was the return of two old hands, Adil Rashid and Moeen Ali, said Mark Nicholas on ESPNcricinfo. Neither had played in an ODI since last summer, and it was clear they had benefited from the break: Rashid took three wickets for 51; Ali looked re-energised, and “bowled like he meant it”.

Archer remains England’s most talented ODI bowler, said Michael Vaughan in *The Daily Telegraph*. But he will be out for the next three months, having been diagnosed with a stress fracture to his right elbow. And when he returns, England will have to use him more selectively – in all formats. Since Archer’s debut last May, he has bowled 595 more deliveries in international cricket than his next most prolific teammate. But bowling at speeds of up to 96mph “puts an incredible strain on the body”, and this injury should be considered a warning sign. Keeping Archer fit will be especially important ahead of the Ashes in Australia next year: with his height and bounce, “he will be key”.

Commentary box

Record-breaking Reekie

Until the start of the month, few had heard of Jemma Reekie, said Ben Bloom in *The Daily Telegraph*. The 21-year-old Scot had hardly competed at international level. But a remarkable week has changed all that: in the space of just two races, she broke three British records. First, a fortnight ago, Reekie ran 800m in 1min 57.91sec – “the quickest indoor 800m in the world for 14 years”. And she followed that up last Saturday with an “equally spectacular” run: her 4min 17.88sec in the indoor mile was the fifth fastest of all time, knocking almost a second off the British indoor mile record; on the way, she also broke the British indoor 1,500m record. That bodes very well indeed for the Olympics this summer, said Rick Broadbent in *The Times*. This “rapid ascent” is just the start: Reekie could be “about to raise the roof”.



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LETTERS

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Pick of the week's correspondence

Welfare and well-being*To The Guardian*

Current explanations of suicide, such as Thomas Joiner's, suggest that a sense of not belonging and feeling a burden are important triggers for suicide attempts, so it's no surprise that stopping benefits, or handling them badly with people already prone to such feelings due to mental health problems, has led to an increase in deaths ("Dozens of suicides linked to handling of benefit claims").

When worth is increasingly defined by ability to be economically productive, the underlying message is that you are a burden and don't belong. This is what may be contributing to rising suicide rates for men aged 20-24 when they try to join the workforce and develop careers, men and women aged 45-49 when they can be facing a plateau in their careers and redundancy, and older men who can be more prone to defining value via their work role.

A compassionate society would recognise that contributions can be made outside work, and facilitate this, rather than communicate a sense that if you cannot work you may as well be on the scrapheap, or even not here at all.

Dr Chris Allen, consultant clinical psychologist, Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

#MeToo and morality*To The Economist*

I was saddened to see Bagehot referring to the #MeToo movement as exposing "the seamy underbelly of the sexual revolution". Sexual abuse is not an offshoot of the sexual revolution. The Victorians' adherence to "moral values", lauded in Bagehot's tribute to Gertrude Himmelfarb, were contradicted by the underside of life experienced by women, rich and poor, long before the Swinging Sixties. The only underbelly #MeToo has exposed is the use of privilege to abuse with impunity.

Judy Stanley, USA

Lousy fish farming*To The Spectator*

Mike Daunt describes many of the causes of the decline of Atlantic salmon in Britain ("An

Professional negligence

To The Daily Telegraph

The inquiry into Ian Paterson, the rogue breast cancer surgeon, has shocked the British public, and rightly so.

How is it that Paterson could avoid scrutiny for so long? The reality is that there are no meaningful regular checks and balances on the performance and outcomes of individual surgeons and anaesthetists. Unlike airline pilots, who have compulsory simulator assessments of competency every six months, surgeons can go their entire career without being scrutinised in theatre by their peers. The current appraisal and revalidation system does little to assess a surgeon's behaviour, clinical skills or dexterity.

There will be more cases such as Paterson's until we subject surgeons (and other doctors) to the same rigorous scrutiny that is applied to pilots by the Civil Aviation Authority.

David Allen MBBS, Chichester, West Sussex

To The Daily Telegraph

In the late 1970s I was a detective sergeant serving at Carter Street, the busiest station in London. We had a detective chief inspector, two detective inspectors and four detective sergeants, who had four detective constables under them.

Each detective had to pass an intensive course before being allowed to investigate crimes. There were about ten "major" crimes reported each day; all scenes were visited, with the victims interviewed and statements taken. We also dealt with prisoners brought in by uniform colleagues, prepared prosecution papers for the solicitors' department or the Director of Public Prosecutions, attended court and undertook the prosecutions prior to trial. We were professional, efficient and actually solved crimes.

Nowadays, reporting a crime is only useful for insurance purposes, and you will only speak to a police officer if you have CCTV to use as evidence.

Bring back the old days.

Paul Slaughter, Alsager, Cheshire

upstream struggle"), but he fails to mention one of the principal villains: fish farming. Wherever marine salmon farming takes place, the decline of wild salmon nearby is far steeper. Young salmon and sea trout leaving rivers along Scotland's "aquaculture coast" – anywhere between Argyll and Shetland – routinely hit a wall of lice and chemicals from an industry that has always had its back covered by Holyrood.

The pollution is also genetic. Last week, a mass escape from a farm off Colonsay released 78,000 fish – about double the number of wild salmon caught in the whole of Scotland on rod and line in 2018.

Donald Rice, Dundonnell, Ross and Cromarty

A dating game*To The Sunday Times*

Your news article on last Sunday's palindromic date, 02/02/2020, was great fun, but there remains an even stranger

fact about dates in that format. On a day in King Alfred's reign, 28/08/888, all the numerals were even numbers, and that did not occur again until 02/02/2000. A completely useless but mildly amusing piece of information.

Ralph Lloyd-Jones, Nottingham

What's in a book?*To the New Statesman*

Leaving aside Walter Benjamin's essay "Unpacking My Library", I can think of other reasons to doubt Amelia Tait's claim that books can be reduced to their contents.

As I write, I'm holding my grandfather's palm-sized copy of Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. He wrote his name and "Easter 1940" inside the cover, and it immediately evokes

memories of him in a dressing gown and slippers, shuffling off to make Grandma's morning tea, intoning in his Mancunian accent the opening lines of the poem: "Awake! for Morning in the/Bowl of Night/ Has flung the Stone that puts the/Stars to Flight:/And Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught/ The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of/Light."

That – the ability for evocation – is the magic of the book as physical object.

Richard Tagart, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

Everyone's auntie*To The Times*

Any debate about the future of the BBC must take account of the full scope of its services and its unique role in our national life. Unlike Netflix or Amazon, the BBC is British to the core (and a powerful ambassador for our country). Alongside its award-winning TV dramas and comedies it offers unrivalled national and local radio, a website used daily by millions, and the hugely admired World Service. The licence fee may seem anachronistic, but it has proved a remarkably robust and efficient way of investing billions of pounds in our cultural life, commissioning writers and artists, supporting orchestras and offering a platform for unsigned bands. Its universality gives the BBC an imperative to serve all British citizens, rich or poor, and to provide news services that are not at the whim of a remote media mogul. If a better way of doing this can be found, I am all for it, but we should beware throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Matthew Bannister, broadcaster and former director of BBC Radio



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Review of reviews: Books

38

Book of the week

A Curious History of Sex

by Kate Lister

Unbound 384pp £25

The Week Bookshop £21.99 (incl. p&p)

“Buckle your trousers, fasten your seatbelts, here comes Kate Lister,” said Gerard DeGroot in *The Times*. In this “wild ride” of a book, the academic and blogger serves up a “wonderfully irreverent” history of sex. She discusses, among other subjects, “masturbation, sex dolls, vibrators, odours, aphrodisiacs, oysters, pubic hair, condoms and prostitution”. Her emphasis, though, is on the “really weird stuff” that people have got up to over the centuries. We learn that the earliest dildo (a stone phallus measuring 7.8 inches) is some 28,000 years old. In medieval times, doctors thought erections were gas-powered – and so prescribed beans as a cure for impotence. Bicycles featured prominently in Victorian erotica (“Lister provides ample visual evidence”) and in the 1920s, the craze for “gland therapy” – using animal testicles to make tablets and creams, and even grafting them onto human scrotums – led one doctor to set up his own monkey colony. I have read some surprisingly boring histories of sex, but Lister’s isn’t one of them. Underpinned by “gargantuan knowledge”, it’s eye-opening and extremely funny.



“Had Victoria Wood decided to write a scholarly book about sex, it would be like this,” said Roger Lewis in the *Daily Mail*. Lister brings to her investigations a “saucy wit”; I laughed out loud at her description of vibrators being marketed as a cure for “colds, digestive complaints and flatulence”. But her book, at times, is also “very angry-making”. The history of sex has largely been a story of “suppression” – and as Lister shows, it is women and “women’s passion” that have been most “relentlessly” policed.

Lister invites us to “marvel at the horrors inflicted upon innocent women in the name of science and religion”, said Johanna Thomas-Corr in *The Sunday Times*. From Vestal Virgins in Ancient Rome – entombed alive if they were found to have had sex – to the “clitorectomies” of the 19th century, she shows that cranks, zealots and

“mansplainers” have always dominated in the sexual arena. Her stories are often diverting: the clitoris was “discovered” in 1550 by Gabriele Falloppio, he of fallopian tube fame (“Lucky Mrs Falloppio”); cornflakes were invented “with the specific aim of discouraging masturbation”. But as the book goes on, its whimsy wears thin. “Holes are left gaping”: sex and bread-making merits a chapter of its own, but not pornography or sodomy. “*A Curious History of Sex* falls into the slightly embarrassing English tradition of tittering at naughty French pictures. It feels like a missed opportunity.”

A Place for Everything

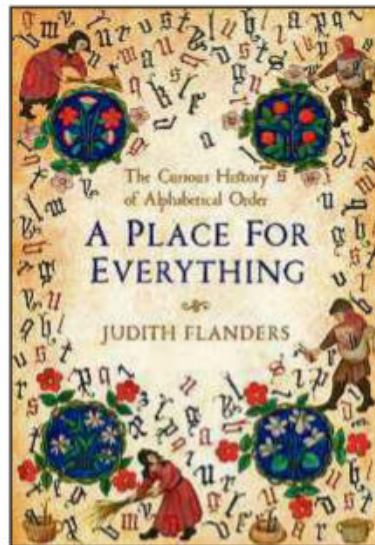
by Judith Flanders

Picador 272pp £16.99

The Week Bookshop £14.99

Judith Flanders is a “meticulous historian with a taste for the offbeat”, said Dan Jones in *The Sunday Times*. In this compelling book, she tackles a subject that “suits her well”: the history of alphabetical order. While the alphabet itself dates back some 4,000 years, it wasn’t until about 2,000 years after this that people began using it as an ordering tool: one of the first instances, according to Flanders, was at the Great Library in Alexandria, which burnt down in 48BC. For a long time after this, alphabetisation remained “one system among many”, often losing out to the medieval preference for “religious hierarchy”. A dictionary compiled by an abbot in tenth century England, for example, “first had entries pertaining to God and the heavens, before descending carefully from the sacred to the profane”.

It was the Renaissance that turned alphabetisation into the pre-eminent ordering device, said Libby Purves in *The Times*. After Gutenberg, printers embraced the ABC, and once each book had at last got the same page numbers (impossible in the days of hand copying), the alphabetical index was born. And yet alphabetical order continued to meet with resistance: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for instance, complained that the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* was “a huge uncollected miscellany... in an arrangement determined by the accident of initial letters”. It’s a good moment to be telling the story of alphabetical order, just when digitisation seems poised to do away with it, said Joe Moran in *The Guardian*. “Who bothers with an A-Z atlas or a phone book in the age of the satnav and the search engine?” Despite feeling “exhaustively informative” at times, Flanders’s book tells “an intriguing history not just of alphabetical order, but of the human need for both pattern and intellectual efficiency”.



Novel of the week

Strange Hotel

by Eimear McBride

Faber 160pp £12.99

The Week Bookshop £10.99

Eimear McBride’s third novel is the story of a middle-aged woman who travels the world, staying in “a series of hotels in Avignon, Prague, Oslo, Auckland and Austin”, said John Self in *The Times*. We learn little about her or the places she visits. In the hotels, she meets up with men for sex, but otherwise remains “enclosed in thoughts” that return obsessively to a past relationship. Although in some ways “slighter” than McBride’s two previous books – the dazzlingly inventive *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing* (2013) and *The Lesser Bohemians* (2016) – this is still a strangely “hypnotic” work: the “most interesting boring book of the season”.

While McBride “captures brilliantly” the uncanny sameness of hotel rooms, I was left unconvinced by the novel as a whole, said Holly Williams in *The Observer*. “There’s a stuffy, airless claustrophobia to the character’s solipsism”, and her language is less original than before. It may seem simple, but this is a work of “deep psychological complexity”, said Carl Wilkinson in the *FT*. *Strange Hotel* is a “finely controlled” and “absorbing” novel.

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Theatre: The Haystack

Hampstead Theatre, London NW3 (020-7722 9301). Until 7 March Running time: 2hrs 45mins ★★★★★

This first-rate debut play by Al Blyth, a former economist at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, is a “gripping thriller” centred on two clever young “geeks” working at GCHQ, said Dominic Cavendish in The Daily Telegraph. Zef and Neil are tasked with finding out how Cora, a Guardian journalist, is getting her scoops about Middle East politics. And the plot thickens when Neil moves from eavesdropping on Cora’s life to insinuating himself into it, and the journalist disappears. The piece “fizzes with wit, buzz-words and teched-up references”. It plays out as a “dark, twisty love-story with complex ethical and intellectual ramifications”: what is the right balance between state surveillance and individual freedom in the age of terrorism? If protecting the public demands “technological omniscience”, doesn’t this mean the end of democracy? These are the questions at the heart of *The Haystack*, a play that’s so good it deserves packed houses and a future life as a TV spin-off.

I, too, was highly impressed by this “pacy, brainy surveillance thriller”, said Mark Lawson in The Guardian, though initially it is a bit too reliant on video wizardry. However, director Roxana Silbert’s high-energy staging turns “searingly theatrical” when the double lives of spies are dramatised by having characters conduct multiple conversations simultaneously. John le Carré himself



Morison delivers a riveting turn in this “gripping thriller”

“might admire” some of the ensuing exchanges and set-ups. Blyth’s dialogue is “spiky, salty and very funny”, said Alun Hood on What’s On Stage. And it is well-served by the brilliant acting: Enyi Okoronkwo is “hilarious then chilling” as Zef; playing Neil, Oliver Johnstone is quite “terrific”; Rona Morison is riveting as Cora; and Sarah Woodward delivers a “magnificent” turn as the “allegedly humane” face of GCHQ.

I have a few reservations, said Marianka Swain on The Arts Desk. In the overlong first half there were so many “genre clichés” it felt as if we were playing “spy thriller bingo”. But the sizzling second half, featuring “several gasp-inducing reveals”, is urgent, unsettling and wholly persuasive: “a microcosmic, human example of a well-meaning nation losing itself entirely”.

The week’s other opening

I Think We Are Alone Kings Theatre, Edinburgh, 18-22 February, then touring until 16 May (franticassembly.co.uk)

Frantic Assembly, the acclaimed physical theatre company, mark their 25th anniversary with Sally Abbott’s “bittersweet” play, about the human search for connection. It’s a “tender sweep” of a show, that “swells” with humanity (Guardian).

Theatre: Endgame and Rough for Theatre II

The Old Vic, London SE1 (0344-871 7628). Until 28 March Running time: 2hrs 15mins ★★★

Comparisons may be odious, but watching this unexciting revival of *Endgame* (1957), I couldn’t help but recall the “perfect” West End staging of 2004, starring Michael Gambon and Lee Evans, said Dominic Cavendish in The Daily Telegraph. Compared to that triumph, Richard Jones’s staging of Samuel Beckett’s bleakest play is thin gruel, the “gallows humour” lacking the necessary “mordant edge”. As Hamm, the play’s “querulous armchair-bound kingpin”, Alan Cumming is all “feline self-possession” where he needs to be monstrous.

And as Clov, the supposedly decrepit, hobbling servant, Daniel Radcliffe cannot overcome his “undisguisable youth”. Both actors acquit themselves “far better” as two other-worldly bureaucrats in the curtain-raiser on this Beckett double-bill, *Rough for Theatre II*. That short piece proves “droll and illuminating”. Sadly, it can’t make up for the disappointing main event.

This *Endgame* is “studded with arresting moments”, said Susannah Clapp in The Observer, but what it lacks “is really powerful darkness”. The best performances are not those of the two leads, but of the two aged dustbin dwellers, Nagg and Nell; Karl Johnson is “simple and grave” and Jane Horrocks is simply “extraordinary”. That said, Cumming is still a commanding presence as Hamm – “posh and wittily malign”. Alas, Radcliffe is not in the same class. Scampering up and sliding down ladders, he



Cumming and Radcliffe: making “difficult” theatre entertaining

shows himself to be impressively agile, but his acting is “almost entirely in gestures. He never suggests that his movements are generated from inside; when he hobbles you can almost see the stage directions.”

On the contrary, said Andrzej Lukowski in Time Out, in my view Radcliffe’s performance as the resentfully servile Clov is a “physical marvel”, vaguely recalling a “Monty Python Gumby as he clumps and clonks about the stage”. Indeed, for an actor fated to be known as a wizard, Radcliffe is proving himself a “formidable clown”.

His physical clowning skills plus Cumming’s “verbal show-boating” – in a “flamboyantly scenery-chewing audience-pleaser of a performance” – make this *Endgame* much funnier than normal. This is Beckett presented almost as “surrealist sitcom”: it is “difficult” theatre made entertaining. And that’s a good thing.

Album of the week

Marc Almond: Chaos and a Dancing Star BMG £10

With Soft Cell, Marc Almond was the 1980s’ “foremost chronicler of Soho sleaze” – and at 62, he remains in fine voice and “as tortured as ever”. This strong collection is “fraught and grandiose, but great fun” and high camp, as Almond “faces mortality through a gauze of Scott Walker-style melodrama” (Times).

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Film

Parasite: the film that triumphed at the Oscars ★★★★★*A darkly enjoyable class-war thriller Dir: Bong Joon-ho 2hrs 12mins (15)*

“If there were an Oscar for most boring awards event ever,” said Maureen Callahan in the New York Post, it should surely go to the Oscars. This year they decided to do without a host, which meant we had to endure a series of third-rate introductions for each category, not least a turn from James Corden and Rebel Wilson dressed as their characters “from the colossal bomb, *Cats*”. It was teeth-grinding. “Academy, we beg you: bring us Ricky Gervais.” Then we had to listen to Joaquin Phoenix, in his speech for best actor (in *Joker*), inveighing against the dairy industry; and to Renée Zellweger (best actress for *Judy*) taking a thinly veiled swipe at Donald Trump. Yet, the evening did not go entirely as predicted. Everyone imagined, as Jane Fonda came up to present best picture, that the award would go to Sam Mendes’s Bafta- and Golden Globe-winner, *1917*; or to Martin Scorsese’s *The Irishman*; or to Quentin Tarantino’s *Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood* (for which Brad Pitt did win best supporting actor). Instead, the winner turned out to be a low-budget Korean thriller, *Parasite*, the first non-English-language film to win the best picture award in the Oscars’ 92-year history.

Parasite’s accolades – it also won the awards for director, original screenplay and international film – are entirely deserved,



The accolades are entirely deserved

said Peter Bradshaw in The Guardian. After years of rewarding “mediocrity”, the Academy has finally made a “bold and brilliant choice” by selecting this satirical suspense drama. The Kims are a hapless working-class family living in a hovel in Seoul, said Robbie Collin in The Daily Telegraph. And when the son manages to bluff his way into a tutoring job for the Parks, a rich family living in a mansion, the entire family inveigles its way, cuckoo-style, into the Park family nest. What follows is a hilarious “domestic heist” that descends into “horribly creative bloodshed”.

The plot of this “darkly enjoyable” class-war thriller clicks into place like a Rubik’s cube, said Tom Shone in The Sunday Times. *Parasite* glides from social commentary to horror film to “Grand Guignol farce” without becoming heady or didactic. Indeed, the Kims, expert in the arts of deception, are far from impoverished saints, said Mark Kermode in The Observer; but then again, it turns out the Parks are pretty skilful at them too. And the narrative is more Shakespearean than Hitchcockian – a “tragicomic masterclass” in which the flawless ensemble cast hit every note perfectly. *Parasite* will undoubtedly get under your skin and – at risk of adding to the hype – “it really is the kind of remarkable experience that makes modern movie-going such a joy”.

Birds of Prey ★★*Lively but slight outing for Harley Quinn Dir: Cathy Yan 1hr 49mins (15)*

Now here’s a first: a Hollywood comic-book film written and directed by women, featuring a female cast and with no male sidekicks or love interests. Long overdue, you may think, said Nicholas Barber on BBC Culture, and bound to inspire a generation of girls. Perhaps so, but that doesn’t mean it’s any good. Margot Robbie plays Harley Quinn, a “cutesy psychopath” who has split from her boyfriend, the Joker, and so finds herself adrift in Gotham without the protection of a supervillain. So she promises another Gotham crime lord (Ewan McGregor) that she’ll recover a priceless diamond stolen from him. There are no decent twists or punchlines and precious little plot. “But because it has lots of swearing, violence, snazzy disco outfits and girl-



power slogans, the viewer is supposed to cheer and high-five, all the same.”

The fight scenes do have a certain “snap and surprise”, said A.O. Scott in The New York Times. But the repartee is “less than sparkling” and any critique of male entitlement dissolves into “jokey irreverence”. *Birds of Prey* plays at provocation “while carefully declining to provoke anything like a thought”. The action limps along until the climax arrives “with an embarrassed

sigh”, said Kevin Maher in The Times. One of the characters unleashes “the mother of all sonic screams”, a metaphor perhaps for all women denied a voice in Hollywood. “They will be heard. Because they have the right, just like all the men who have gone before them, to make vulgar, turgid crap. And they have.”

Dolittle ★*A laboured and lacklustre adaptation with Downey Jr at the helm Dir: Stephen Gaghan 1hr 41mins (PG)*

Doctor Dolittle, a Victorian physician who can talk to animals, was the main character of the popular children’s books written by Hugh Lofting in the interwar years. And there have been many film adaptations since then, few of them successful. In 1967, the screen musical featuring Rex Harrison was so catastrophic it nearly sank 20th Century Fox. Nor, I fear, can any doctor “cure what ails” this new adaptation, said Todd McCarthy in The Hollywood Reporter. It stars Robert Downey Jr as a reclusive Dolittle who voyages across the seas to find a cure for an ailing Queen Victoria, and features the usual cocktail of “special effects and sweeping visuals”. Alas, little of the thrill of an epic journey “spills over to intoxicate the



viewer”. Director Stephen Gaghan seems out of his element, unable to handle whimsy, talking gorillas and the finer points “of the British Empire at its zenith”.

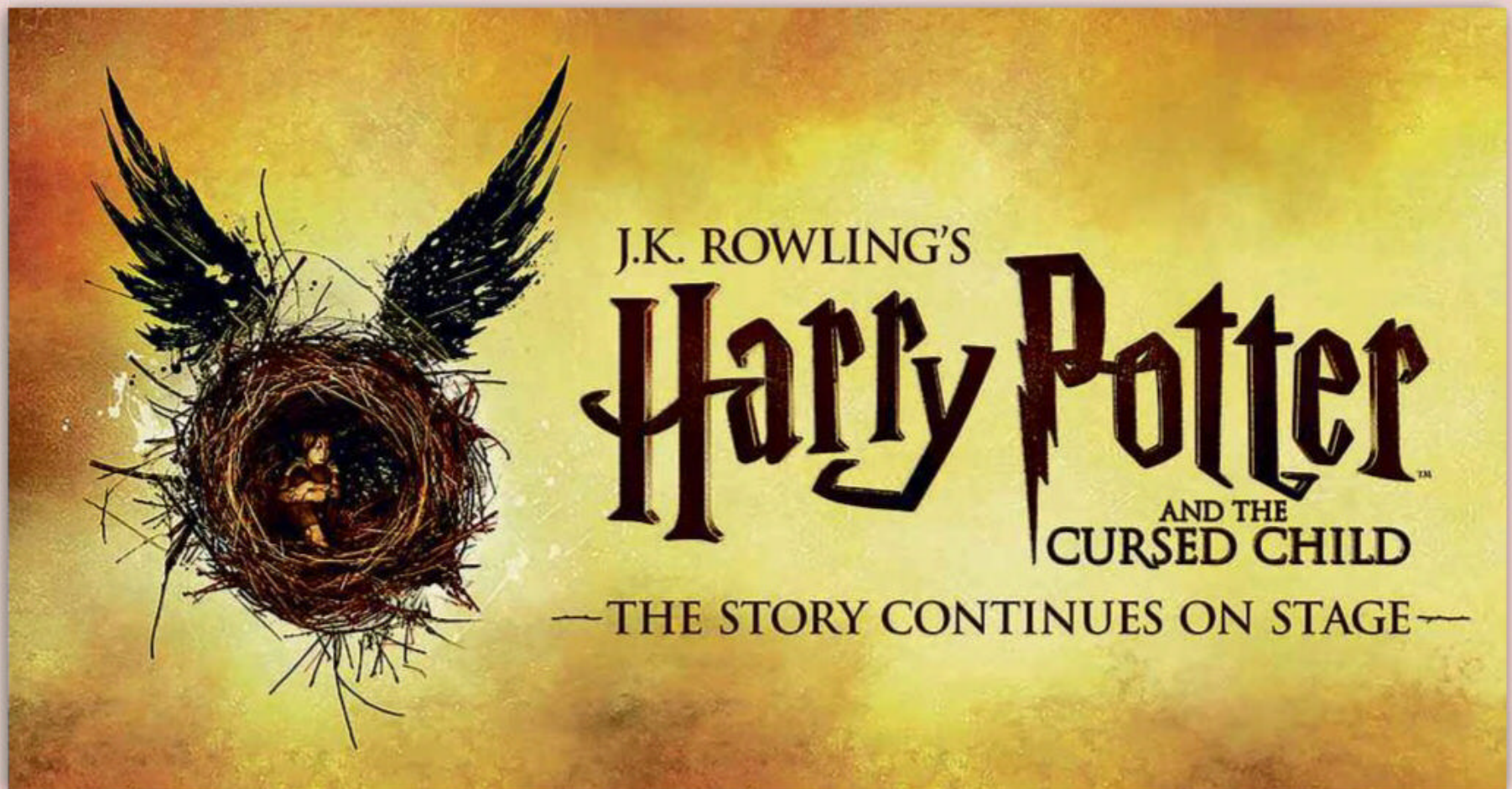
With Antonio Banderas and Jim Broadbent in supporting roles; animals voiced by Emma Thompson and Ralph Fiennes, and a production budget of some \$175m, the film needed “to work hard to fail”, said Brian Viner in the Daily Mail. But it somehow manages to do so. Downey

Jr’s Welsh accent meanders from Cardiff to California by way of Calcutta in a performance entirely lacking in “oomph”; the script is full of laboured slapstick and quips “that fall with resounding thuds”. This is destined to be a “catastrophic commercial flop”.

THE WEEK Tickets

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child

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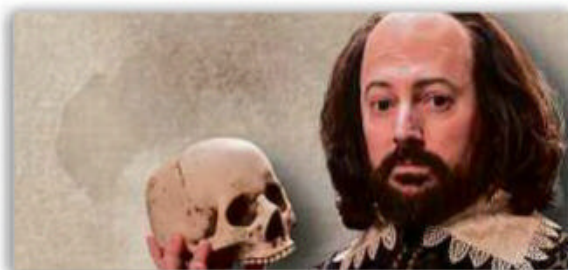
Based on an original new story by **J.K. Rowling, Jack Thorne** and **John Tiffany**, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* is a new play by Jack Thorne. It is the eighth story in the Harry Potter series and the first official Harry Potter story to be presented on stage.

It was always difficult being Harry Potter and it isn't much easier now that he is an overworked employee of the Ministry of Magic, a husband and father of three school-age children.

While Harry grapples with a past that refuses to stay where it belongs, his youngest son Albus must struggle with the weight of a family legacy he never wanted. As past and present fuse ominously, both father and son learn the uncomfortable truth: sometimes, darkness comes from unexpected places.

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child is one play presented in two parts, which are intended to be seen in order on the same day (matinee and evening) or on two consecutive evenings.

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Exhibition of the week **Tullio Crali: A Futurist Life**

Estorick Collection, London N1 (020-7704 9522, estorickcollection.com). Until 11 April

The Italian futurist painter Tullio Crali (1910-2000) captured the “exhilaration” of flying like no other, said Maggie Gray in *Apollo* magazine. Futurism, an avant-garde movement founded in Italy in 1909, celebrated speed, technology and modernity – the car, the train, the plane and, at times, industrialised warfare. Crali had a “remarkable capacity for translating the power and drama of flight into paint”. Yet he remains relatively unrecognised, perhaps because of his “enthusiasm for militarised flight”; though he shied away from politics, he made some of his best known paintings as a war artist in Mussolini’s Italy, and the “uncomfortably close” links between Italian fascism and futurism have meant that his work has seldom been exhibited since 1945. This new exhibition at the Estorick Collection is the first survey of Crali’s work ever to be held in the UK, and suggests that he should be regarded as one of the greats of 20th century Italian art. With a wide selection of thrilling, rarely seen paintings, the show traces Crali’s career from the 1920s to the 1980s and invites us to reconsider the achievements of a singularly talented artist.

Crali was a generation younger than the most famous futurist artists, such as Umberto Boccioni, but he took aerial painting to



Jonathan Monoplane (1988): “thrillingly real”

new heights, said Lucy Davies in *The Daily Telegraph*. Drawing on his “first-hand experience” – he flew regularly with both an airline and a fighter squadron – he produced “thrillingly real” evocations of flying. *Upside Down Loop (Death Loop)* (1938), for instance, is a vision of a pilot’s view from the open cockpit of an upturned plane, the cityscape below heaving towards us “in stomach-lurching fashion”; the vertigo-inducing *Before the Parachute Opens* (1939), has a figure “trapped in the few surreal seconds after he has leapt from the plane door”. Crali was not a committed fascist – in fact he was deemed a “subversive” by the Nazis. But he remained fascinated by flight and aesthetically devoted to futurism all his life.

Crali was equally accomplished when depicting more terrestrial

subjects, said Laura Cumming in *The Observer*. *The Forces of the Bend* (1930), an extraordinary vision of a speeding red sports car rounding a corner that he painted when he was just 20, is considerably “more sophisticated than anything by his contemporaries”, while a 1930 landscape of Ostia in the evening sun might just be the “most beautiful scene Crali ever painted”. This is an altogether “riveting” exhibition that “surprises from first to last”: a “head-on revelation”.

Where to buy...

The Week reviews an exhibition in a private gallery

Salvador Dalí

at Omer Tiroche Gallery

Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) is loved and sometimes loathed for his emblematic scenes depicting melting clocks, barren desert landscapes and strange, mutant figures. His endlessly reproduced canvases and outrageous public persona can serve to obscure the fact that he really could draw – and did so, prodigiously. This exhibition is based around four sketchbooks dating from 1930 to 1939 in which the artist made his preparatory drawings for such major works as *Phantom Cart* and *The Burning Giraffe*, exposing his creative processes and demonstrating quite how good a draughtsman he could be when stripped back to the basics of pencil and paper. There are some stunning images here: one drawing presents a devilish male face in profile, holding a cricket to his nose, fine lines making his beard



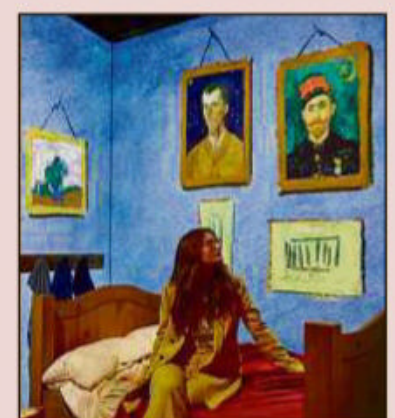
Dessin pour American Weekly (1935)

appear almost three-dimensional; another gives us a haphazard tangle of strokes that, viewed from a distance, ingeniously join up to form the figure of a female nude. Whatever he does in these books, Dalí makes it look deceptively easy. Prices on request.

21 Conduit Street, London W1 (020-7499 5143). Until 30 April.

Van Goff? Van Go? Van Hock?

“How do you pronounce Van Gogh,” asked Emma Reynolds on CNN. British people tend to say “Van Goff”; Americans say “Van Go”; the French say “Van Gog”. They’re all wrong, according to experts at the launch of a new exhibition in London last week. The interactive exhibition *Meet Vincent van Gogh* on the South Bank (pictured) uses the American version in its audio guide. In response, Adriaan Dönszelmann, a director of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, made a plea for his name to be pronounced “in the real Dutch way”: as “Van Hockh”. But the confusion didn’t end there, said David Sanderson in *The Times*. The Dutch ambassador to the UK, Simon Smits, said the name differently, with a guttural “khokh”. All this is nothing new: as van Gogh himself explained in a letter to his brother, he signed his paintings “Vincent” rather than “Van Gogh” when he was living in France, “for the excellent reason that people here wouldn’t be able to pronounce that name”.



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The List

38

Best books... Hannah Rothschild

The author, filmmaker and philanthropist chooses her favourite novels. Her new novel, *House of Trelawney* (Bloomsbury £16.99), a love story and satire about the 2008 financial crash, is out now



The Way We Live Now by Anthony Trollope, 1875 (Wordsworth Classics £2.50). Surely the biggest, baddest baddie in literature, Augustus Melmotte, a foreigner intent on swindling dumb British toffs, arrives with a load of fake shares and a beautiful daughter. He nearly succeeds but his comeuppance, when it comes, is bleak, pathetic and thoroughly enjoyable.

The Pursuit of Love by Nancy Mitford, 1945 (Penguin £8.99). A present from my grandmother to mark my 15th birthday and treasured ever since. Mitford's satire tells the loosely autobiographical tale of a charming and bonkers aristocratic family.

Scoop by Evelyn Waugh, 1938 (Penguin £9.99). An utterly absurd but brilliant case of mistaken identity: a newspaper sends its nature correspondent to cover an African civil war. This fast, light and lethal novel skewers journalists and the privileged.

The Neapolitan Novels by Elena Ferrante, 2012-2015 (Europa Editions £12.99 each). I read these four books about two friends from childhood to middle age back to back, only pausing/sleeping from absolute necessity. Husbands, lovers, family and children are bit-part players on a stage dominated by one central extraordinary and destructive female friendship.

Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy, 1878 (Penguin £8.99). One-line synopsis: an entrancing, beautiful woman lives and then dies for passion. It should be required reading for anyone wanting to learn about themselves or others: on every page, Tolstoy lays bare the frailties and peccadillos of human behaviour.

The Overstory by Richard Powers, 2018 (Vintage £9.99). Nine Americans from disparate backgrounds come together to save a forest. This extraordinary novel transformed my view of nature. Never again will I pass a great tree without offering a quiet but heartfelt incantation of thanks, gratitude and wonder.

Titles in print are available from The Week Bookshop on 020-3176 3835. For out-of-print books visit biblio.co.uk

The Week's guide to what's worth seeing and reading

Showing now

Steve McQueen The first major UK exhibition in 20 years of the only person to win the Turner Prize and an Oscar includes video and large-scale installations, and a homage to the African-American singer and civil rights activist Paul Robeson (Guardian). Until 11 May, Tate Modern, London SE1 (tate.org.uk).

Alone in Berlin, the international bestseller about a couple's secret resistance in Nazi Germany has been adapted for the stage (What's on Stage). Until 29 February, Royal & Derngate, Northampton; then on to York Theatre Royal, 3-21 March; and the Oxford Playhouse, 24-28 March.

Book now

Over 300 speakers, including Val McDermid, Jess Phillips MP and campaigner Peter Tatchell, will take part in events at the county-wide **Essex Book Festival**. Various venues, 28 February-31 March (essexbookfestival.org.uk).

Following the success of his *Cyrano de Bergerac* (until 29 February), Jamie Lloyd directs *Game*



A still from Steve McQueen's *Ashes* (2002-2015)

of *Thrones*' Emilia Clarke in a new version of Chekhov's **The Seagull**, from 11 March-30 May. Both at The Playhouse Theatre, London WC2 (0844-871 7631).

Just out in paperback

Queenie by Candice Carty-Williams (Trapeze £8.99). Shortlisted for the Costa first novel award, this slice of black British life "has been hailed as the black Bridget Jones". But it touches on serious issues too (Guardian).

Television Programmes

Homeland As the final series opens, Saul is in Kabul negotiating peace with the Taliban and needs Carrie's help one last time. Sun 16 Feb, C4 21:00 (75mins).

The Battle for Hong Kong Filmed over eight months, this emotionally charged documentary follows five young activists as they fight on the streets for democracy. Sun 16 Feb, C4 22:15 (60mins).

Confronting Holocaust Denial with David Baddiel The author and comedian explores the history of Holocaust denial and why it persists today, taking Facebook to task and meeting a survivor along the way. Mon 17 Feb, BBC2 21:00 (60mins).

Prison Return of the critically acclaimed series that takes a hard look inside Britain's prisons. Part one visits HMP Foston Hall, a women's prison described by one inmate as "St Trinian's on crack". Mon 17 Feb, C4 21:00 (60mins).

This Country Kerry and Kurtan are back for a third series of the Bafta-winning mockumentary about life in rural Gloucestershire. There's sad news about a popular village resident. Mon 17 Feb, BBC1 22:35 (30mins).

Films

Deepwater Horizon (2016) Surprisingly believable and tense disaster movie about the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Mark Wahlberg and John Malkovich star. Sun 16 Feb, Film4 21:00 (125mins).

My Cousin Rachel (2017) Rachel Weisz plays the enigmatic heroine in this stylish adaptation of Daphne du Maurier's novel. Wed 19 Feb, Film4 21:00 (130mins).

Podcasts of the week

Claudia Winkleman and clinical psychologist Tanya Byron are the "likeable and clever" hosts of **How Did We Get Here**, a new series delving into parent-child relationships (Observer).

From the duo behind the acclaimed *Reasons to Be Cheerful* podcast, The **Cheerful Book Club** sees Ed Miliband and Geoff Lloyd discuss the latest non-fiction titles (cheerfulpodcast.com).

The Archers: what happened last week

Tensions run high at Philip and Kirsty's as Gavin mopes around the house. Helen meets Lee's daughters for the first time, but they seem quiet around her. After berating Josh for his behaviour, Pip later gives him a pep talk. Neil is undecided about the new outdoor unit job at Berrow, and the pay cut, but Susan says she's proud of him no matter what. A broken boiler forces Kate to stay at Jakob's, where she makes herself at home and plans Xander's naming ceremony. After a chat with Jill, Neil decides to take the job. Lynda steps up the campaign to boycott The B at Ambridge, but her sabotage plan backfires, to Lilian's delight. Kate's stay is testing Jakob's patience. Jill organises a family dinner at The B to show support as the pub is so quiet. Rex lets rip at Josh, saying he'll never work for him again. Kenton and a poorly Jolene are worried about business being slow. Out on a walk, Gavin opens up to Kirsty. Kate asks Alice to help with the naming ceremony, and reveals a secret: she's pregnant – she hasn't told Jakob yet, but she knows he'll be delighted.

Houses near great pubs



London: 75 Strand-on-the-Green, Chiswick W4. This semi-detached cottage by the towpath on the banks of the Thames shares a wall with The Bell & Crown, a popular Fuller's brewery pub on the river, with views over Kew Bridge. The house, which is arranged over three floors, was built in 1780 and added to in the Victorian era; there is potential to extend, subject to planning permission. Master bed with balcony overlooking the river, 3 further double beds, 1 single bed, family bath, shower, kitchen, WC, 2 receps, tiered courtyard garden, shed, former garage/utility, OIEO £2m; Riverhomes (020-8995 0500).



Oxfordshire: Cotham Cottage, Milton-under-Wychwood. A Grade II stone cottage in the heart of the village, close to The Hare, which was a county winner in the National Pub & Bar Awards 2018. 3 beds, family bath, WC, kitchen/breakfast room, 1 recep, garden room, hall, utility, front and rear gardens, parking, shed. £425,000; Butler Sherborn (01993-822325).



Devon: Barle Corner, Dulverton. A former coach house and stables on the outskirts of Dulverton, within walking distance of Woods, voted National Wine Pub of the Year ten years running by *The Good Pub Guide*. Master suite, guest suite, 3 further beds, family bath, kitchen/breakfast room, 2 receps, study, utility, WCs, garage, summerhouse, parking, beautiful gardens with vegetable plot and 2-acre paddock. £725,000; Seddons (01398-324488).





Cumbria: New Stickle Cottage, Great Langdale, Ambleside. A lovely Lakeland cottage in the heart of the village, at the foot of the Langdale Pikes in the Lake District National Park. The National Trust-run Sticklebarn pub is within easy walking distance, as is The Old Dungeon Ghyll. 3 double beds, family bath, shower room, kitchen/dining room, 1 further recep, utility, hall, WC, study area, garage, parking, gardens. £850,000; Finest Properties (01539-468400).



Warwickshire: Fox's Cottage, Shipston-on-Stour. A pretty cottage in the heart of the town, close to the stylish, award-winning George Townhouse (county winner of the National Pub & Bar Awards 2017) and the Black Horse Inn, a traditional thatched pub that is popular with locals and serves Thai food. Master suite, 1 further bed, family bath, kitchen/dining room, 1 further recep, WC, hall, walled courtyard garden. £325,000; Pritchard & Company (01608-801030).



Kent: Garden Street, Brompton. This semi-detached town house is close to several traditional pubs, including the King George V. 4 beds, family bath, shower, kitchen, 2 receps, WC, study, cloakroom, garden. £440,000; Hunters (01634-565310).

Northamptonshire: West View Cottage, Whittlebury, Towcester. A pretty detached cottage close to The Fox & Hounds gastro pub. Master suite, 3 further beds, family bath, kitchen, 3 receps, garden. £450,000; Howkins & Harrison (01327-353575).



London: Narrow Street, Limehouse E14. A Grade II warehouse conversion on this popular street, which is also home to the famous The Grapes pub, reportedly frequented by Charles Dickens and now owned by Sir Ian McKellen. Master suite, guest suite, 1 further bed, kitchen/breakfast room, double recep, garage, off-street parking. £2.5m; Hamptons International (020-3369 4586).



Cheshire: Old School House, Spurstow, Tarporley. A Grade II former school house, close to the award-winning Cholmondeley Arms (voted Gin Pub of the Year in the 2019 *Good Pub Guide*). Master suite, guest suite, 2 further beds, 1 further bath, shower, 2 WCs, kitchen, utility, double recep, study, snug, galleried landing and cinema, outbuildings, gardens, pond, 1.4-acre paddock by separate negotiation. £1.1m; Savills (01244-323232).

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LEISURE

Food & Drink

What the experts recommend

Paradise 61 Rupert Street, London W1; paradisesoho.com

“Calling a restaurant Paradise might seem the definition of hubris,” says Marina O’Loughlin in The Sunday Times. But pretty much everything here is in fact “divine”. The expensive-looking decor (all angular lighting and hand-thrown tiling) makes it a “chic place to hang out and watch the vestiges of Sleazy Soho across the road”. No less captivating is Charith Priyadarshana’s Sri Lankan cooking. Mutton rolls are the best I’ve eaten, the “spicing multilayered and resonant”. And such is the “thrilling complexity” of a pork cheek curry, flavoured with stout and lemongrass, that I’m still thinking about it days later. “Even the incidentals are notable”: the *sambols* (chutneys) are deeply flavoured, the *hoppers* “pancakey in their depths”. Central London sites don’t come cheap (this one was advertised at £200,000 per annum, following the departure of the “much-loved Spuntino”) and you worry that the investors have rolling out “firmly in their crosshairs”. I hope not, though: “I like it just the way it is.” *Starters* £4-£8; *mains* £10.50-£12.90.

Bank House 11 High Street, Chislehurst, Kent (020-8249 0461)

Stuart Gillies, the owner of this wine bar and restaurant near Bromley, was formerly the CEO of Gordon Ramsay’s global empire, says Grace Dent in The Guardian. As I have never been one of Ramsay’s



Bank House: “perfectly judged”

greatest fans, it’s quite possible that Gillies has “a photograph of me on his desk complete with scribbled devil horns and a Beelzebub tail”. But possibly his opinion of me will soften now, because “I really cannot quibble” with any aspect of his first solo venture. Housed in a “handsome” Victorian building in Chislehurst (which I discover is a “magical place”), Bank House serves “fiendishly drinkable” cocktails, thoughtfully chosen wines (you can order Royal Tokaji Late Harvest by the glass), and food which occupies a happy middle ground between “house burger” and “excruciating tasting menu”. Buttermilk chicken in tempura batter is “marvellous”; fillet of plaice flecked with beetroot and minutely diced parmesan

might have been “vile” in the wrong hands – but here is “perfectly judged”. Added to all of that, service is “brilliant” and they do half portions of everything for kids at the weekend. “You can’t ask for more than that from a local joint.” *About* £30-£35 a head, plus drinks and service.

The Boxing Hare Banbury Road, Chipping Norton (01608-683212)

I arrived at this Cotswold pub with some “trepidation”, says William Sitwell in The Daily Telegraph. It is located on a “thundering” through road – and I’ve got a thing about traffic noise in the countryside. But I needn’t have worried: on a winter evening with the windows closed (and with the sound of lively chatter inside), “you can’t hear anything”. And things only got better once we’d sat down. Before taking our drinks order, our waiter had brought over bread, butter and water (“it always baffles me as to why more places don’t do this”), and service remained “immaculate and sensible” throughout. As for the food, a starter of “twice baked cave aged Cheddar soufflé” was “so deeply tasty that I forgave the lack of hyphens”; a main course of “joyfully charred” rib-eye, served with thick and crisp chips, was similarly “faultless”. Pudding was a deliciously oozing chocolate fondant. Well-lit, and stylishly furnished, The Boxing Hare is worth a visit, whatever your feelings about the A361. *Dinner for three* £68 excluding drinks and service.

Recipe of the week: a top chef’s favourite

Devilled chilli prawns

The acclaimed London restaurant Hoppers – named after the bowl-shaped rice pancakes that are a staple of Sri Lankan cuisine – opens its third branch this month, in King’s Cross. The recipe below is a favourite of head chef and manager Karan Gokani



Mumbai-born Karan Gokani worked as a lawyer before devoting himself to his first love, cooking. In 2015, with his wife Sunaina Sethi and her two siblings, he set up the original Hoppers in Soho; the second branch, in

Marylebone, followed in 2017. An instant hit, Hoppers has been credited with helping to make Sri Lankan food mainstream in Britain.

300g raw prawns, cleaned and peeled
Sea salt and pepper
2 tsp red chilli flakes
2 tbsp vegetable or rapeseed oil
1/3 of an inch of a cinnamon stick
1 inch of ginger, finely chopped
4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

2-3 green chillies, cut into slivers (seeds removed if you prefer it less spicy)

1 sprig of curry leaves

1 medium tomato, finely chopped

3 tbsp tomato ketchup

1 tsp coconut vinegar (cider vinegar may be used as an alternative)

1 tsp soy sauce

1 medium onion, cut into large cubes

1/2 tsp sugar (optional)

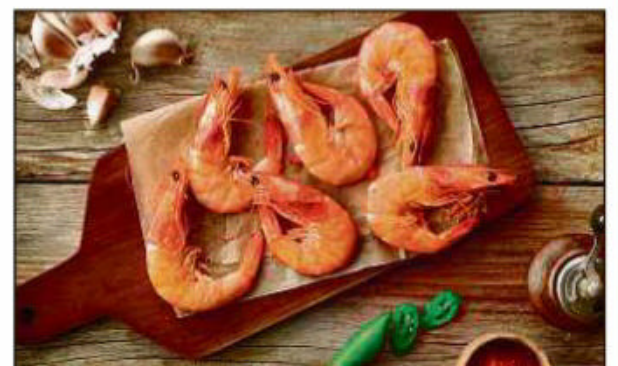
To garnish: 1 tbsp fresh coriander, finely chopped

4 spring onions, sliced

- Generally season the prawns and add half a teaspoon of chilli flakes. Heat 2 tbsp of oil in a wok on a medium heat.
- Add the cinnamon stick, ginger and garlic and stir fry until the garlic turns golden brown, but make sure not to let it burn. Add the remaining chilli flakes, green chilli

and curry leaves. After 20 seconds add the chopped tomato and the ketchup.

- After 3-4 minutes of stir-frying, add all the remaining ingredients, except the prawns and garnish, and stir fry on a medium high heat for 5-6 minutes until the sauce is thick. Add sugar and salt to taste.
- Add the prawns and stir fry on a high heat until cooked through, for 3-4 minutes.
- Take off the heat and garnish with the coriander and spring onions.



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Amnesty supporter, Rosie Cade, who has kindly left a gift to Amnesty in her Will.

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Consumer

LEISURE 8

New cars: what the critics say



Mini Electric
from £24,400

Auto Express

The surprising thing about the new Mini Electric – the brand’s first full production EV – is that it “looks, feels and drives much like a normal Mini”. Granted, it lacks the “individuality” of cars like the upcoming Honda e, and its 140- to 145-mile range lags behind the latest Renault Zoe’s 240 miles. But Mini-lovers will likely find its faithfulness to the brand a huge comfort. This a “solid first effort”.

The Daily Telegraph

It’s true that this three-door hatchback is hard to tell apart from other Minis. Outside the UK, the word electric isn’t even in its name – it’s the Mini Cooper SE. The interior is, as always, “comfortable and snug”, with rear seats that are “tricky” to get into and a small 211-litre boot. The “soup-plate-sized” centre display is great, but it’s a shame you can only get entry-level models in silver and grey.

What Car?

Getting from zero to 62mph in 7.3 seconds, the Mini is “much faster” than its competitors. And like all electric cars, it feeds energy back into the battery when you lift your foot off the accelerator. Meant for urban driving, it is very agile, turning corners with ease. The “payoff” for that agility, however, is a firm ride. Still, it’s a “compelling” package, and one that is “surprisingly well priced”.

The best... noise-cancelling headphones



Sony WH-1000XM3

These are exceptionally comfortable headphones, with a rich bass and great adaptive noise-cancelling tech even when no music is playing. They are also lightweight and can be neatly folded up (£269; johnlewis.com).

Mixcder E9 A great budget option, these Mixcder headphones have an impressive clarity of sound for the price. The noise cancellation cannot match that of more expensive models, but it helps with the sound nonetheless (£73; amazon.co.uk).



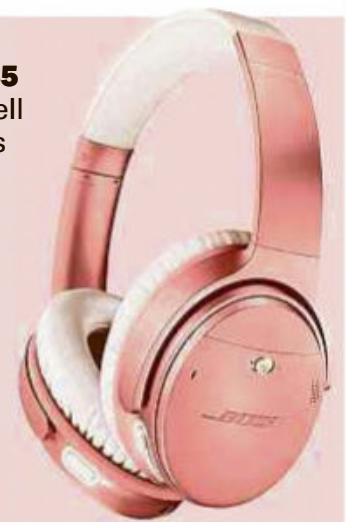
Bang & Olufsen

Beoplay H9i High quality in terms of tech and aesthetics, Bang & Olufsen’s headphones charge quickly, and will even automatically pause and restart your music when you slip them off (£289; amazon.co.uk).



Bose QuietComfort QC35 (Series II)

This pair was well ahead of the curve in terms of noise cancellation when it came on the market. The quality remains top notch, but they look slightly old-fashioned and are missing the bells and whistles of newer models (from £204; argos.co.uk).



Beats Solo Pro

Eschewing the minimalist design trend for most tech, Beats are bubbly and come in fun colours. The maker’s first on-ear active noise-cancelling headphones work a treat, though the bass is on the light side (£270; johnlewis.com).



SOURCES: THE DAILY TELEGRAPH/T3/TECHRADAR.COM/WHAT HI-FI?

Tips of the week... how to get a job

In a cover letter, tell the employer exactly how you meet their personal specification. You can even copy and paste their list, and type a response underneath each point.

Keep your CV short and clean – use a classic font, minimum 10pt size, forget pictures, text boxes or decorative borders, and leave room to breathe. Get to important information as quickly as possible.

You can include complementary personal skills, but don’t use nonsense phrases like telling them something is “in your DNA”.

Make your social media accounts private and rid them of anything controversial.

Before an interview, learn about the company in detail, including its annual plan and the challenges it is facing. If you know who is interviewing you, read about them.

Try to predict their questions and have answers ready, including an honest answer about why you want the job.

At the end, ask about development opportunities in the role, but not the salary.

SOURCE: THE TIMES

And for those who have everything...



While it might be hard to imagine much crossover between the people who can afford a gold leaf-covered skateboard and the people who use a skateboard, Yves Saint Laurent has made one just in case. The pricetag, mind you, is for the board only – wheels and fixtures sold separately.

\$3,025; ysl.com

SOURCE: ROBB REPORT

Where to find... vegan subscription boxes

Great for batch-cooking easy lunches for the week ahead, **Abel & Cole’s vegan one-pot wonder recipe box** contains the ingredients for six servings of recipes that cook in one pot (£15; abelandcole.co.uk).

Designed to keep your snacks healthy, the **Lifebox** is filled with bites from established vegan brands, like Rebel Kitchen and Pip & Nut (from £23; lifeboxfood.com).

The **Natural Wellness Box** is full of quality, cruelty-free beauty and “wellness” products, from bath soaks to a lavender candle made with a coconut and soy-wax blend (from £35; naturalwellnessbox.co.uk).

Aimed at families trying to go vegan, the **Vegan Apron recipe box** can contain from three to seven recipes’ worth of vegan dinners meant to serve two adults and two children (from £64; veganapron.com).

As well as a personal box, the **Healthy Nibbles vegan snack box** comes as an office one, with 30 sweet and savoury snacks (£12 & £48.70; healthynibbles.co.uk).

SOURCE: THE INDEPENDENT

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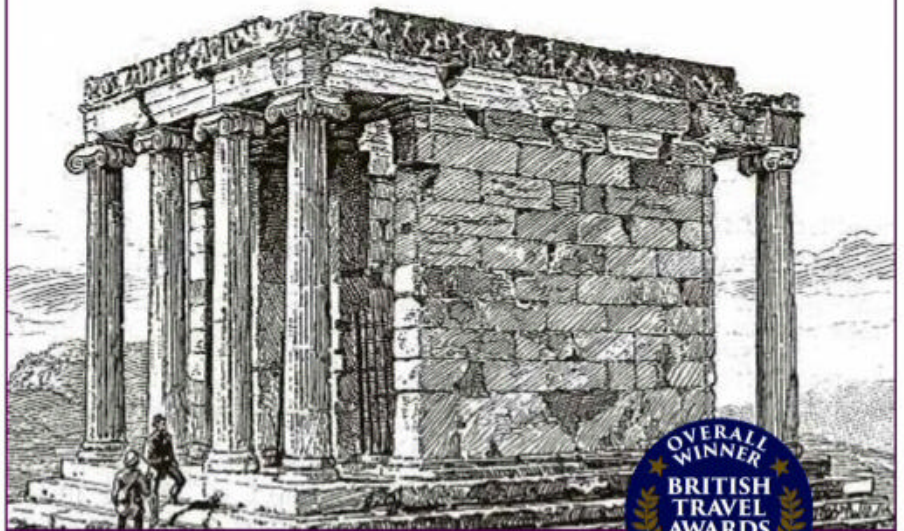
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This week's dream: nomads and monks on Ladakh's high plateau

Caught between the Himalayas and the Karakoram range, the high desert of Ladakh in northern India is dazzling in its beauty. It is a fantastically tough environment, but it can be explored in style with the small Himalayan tour operator Shakti, says Pamela Goodman in *House & Garden*. In the past ten years, Shakti has restored six "exquisite" traditional houses across the state to accommodate guests. Ladakh's capital, Leh, sits at 3,500 metres above sea level, and new arrivals spend two days acclimatising to the altitude at a house set on a picturesque bend in the Indus River.



Tso Moriri: altitude sickness and Stendhal syndrome

What follows is a breathtaking series of road trips and walks, taking in monasteries, forts, remote artisan workshops, deep canyons and epic views of snowcapped peaks.

The first stop is usually the monastery of Alchi, whose elaborate 11th century murals, depicting sinister guardian deities and sensual scenes of courtly carousing, are the grandest works of Himalayan Buddhist art to have survived the Mongol invasion.

From there, guests proceed to the most captivating of Shakti's houses, in the tiny hamlet of Egoo. Inside it is decorated in a gorgeous local "rustic chic" style, and scattered across the remote valley around it are fields of barley and clumps of apple and apricot trees – "ribbons of lush greenery" in Ladakh's vast desert. There's white-water rafting, for those who want it, scrambles up to high stupas and the chance to camp beside the Tso Moriri, a blindingly blue, 16-mile-long lake just 50 miles from the Tibetan border, which sits at 4,522 metres above sea level.

En route, you can visit Changpa nomads, deeply religious Buddhists who live in yak-wool tents and farm pashmina goats, from whose chins ultra-fine cashmere wool is harvested. But there are few signs of life by the lake itself, where the altitude pitches heart and lungs into "overdrive", and the sense of isolation is thrilling. *An eight-day trip costs from \$7,159 per person, full board (shaktihimalaya.com).*

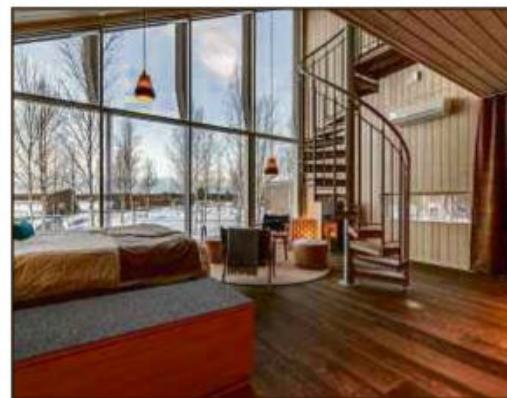
Getting the flavour of...



Málaga's revival

At the turn of the millennium, Málaga was "a B-list destination", with traffic-choked streets and little to recommend it beyond its sunny climate and its situation on a "sweeping" Mediterranean bay. Today, though, it is a first-class candidate for

"a winter weekend escapade", says Paul Richardson in the FT – thanks largely to two decades of investment under a plan that has focused on "culture as a force for urban renewal". The city lacked a good art museum until 2003, when the Museo Picasso opened to house works by its most famous son. Six other excellent museums have followed, including the Carmen Thyssen Collection (of mainly 19th century Spanish painting), and the Ifergan Collection (of ancient art, including much Phoenician). The city has pleasant beach bars and good restaurants too (try Kaleja, behind the Roman theatre), and has just acquired a "really fine" old-town boutique hotel, the Palacio Solecio.



An icy Arctic dip

Hidden in the woods of Swedish Lapland, just shy of the Arctic Circle, the Treehotel achieved instant fame when it opened in 2010 on account of its striking "tree-suspended architectural pods" (a glass cube, a cabin like a bird's nest, another like a UFO).

And last month, its owners launched another "extraordinary" project nearby, says James Stewart in *The Sunday Times* – a spa hotel that floats on the waters of the Lule River. Arctic Bath is doughnut-shaped, and the hole at its heart functions as an icy plunge pool, used alternately with its sauna during an invigorating "spa ritual". Accommodation is in a dozen cabins, each "like the cell of a Wallpaper-obsessed ascetic", some on the water, others on land. Winter activities include dog-sledding and snow-shoeing in an "implausibly beautiful" birch forest, and the five-course evening meals in the restaurant are excellent. *Cabins for two cost from £839 a night, half-board (arcticbath.se).*

Four of the best cultural tours around the world in 2020

Expand your mind and enrich your soul on one of these expert-led group trips, says Gemma Bowes in The Times

Textiles in Gujarat

Led by artist Sue Lawty, this tour of the state of Gujarat in western India focuses on arts and handicrafts, with an emphasis on the region's delicate textiles. There are visits to markets, textile centres, craft workshops and museums, as well as demonstrations of block-printing, tie-dye and embroidery. From the desert town of Bhuj, the group will make forays to artistic Banni villages, before a safari into the Little Rann of Kutch desert. *17-31 October, from £3,095, excluding flights (mountainkingdoms.com).*

Midlands modernism

"A tour of Leicester, Nottingham, Northampton and Coventry might not sound glamorous", but this one is genuinely "hip" thanks to its theme – modern architecture. Historian Alan Powers will guide a small group around buildings including the Curve Theatre in Leicester, the Arts and Crafts Stoneywell house, and Basil Spence's Coventry Cathedral. There will also be time to look at German expressionist art at the New Walk Museum in Leicester. *8-12 September, for £1,245pp b&b (aceculturaltours.co.uk).*

Opera in Munich

This trip to the Bavarian capital during its annual opera festival includes tickets for a recital by tenor Jonas Kaufmann, and for two operas – Verdi's late, great Shakespearean masterpieces *Otello* and *Falstaff*, with singers including Roberto Alagna and Wolfgang Koch. In daylight hours there are guided tours of Munich and some of its cultural highlights, and a cruise on one of the idyllic lakes nearby, the Staffelsee, which is on the edge of the Bavarian Alps. *12-16 July, from £2,340, excluding flights (travelforthearts.com).*

Gardens of Rome

This tour of the most important gardens and villas around Rome starts in Orvieto and proceeds via the capital to Frascati. Highlights include Villa Lante (a perfect Renaissance garden, "full of cascades and grottoes"), Villa Farnese (another Renaissance masterpiece) and Ninfa, where crumbling medieval walls provide a sheltered microclimate for rare plants from all over the world. *This six-night trip has departures in May, June and September from £2,580pp (expressionsholidays.co.uk).*



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See New York's most famous sights. Stroll around Central Park, window-shop on 5th Avenue and take a Manhattan harbour cruise for iconic views of the city's skyline.

Days 3-4. Washington DC

Explore the US capital on a guided tour, taking in the White House and Capitol Hill. Day 4 is at leisure.

Days 5-7. Chicago

Take an overnight journey on Amtrak's Capitol Limited line through vast swathes of American wilderness to Chicago. After a guided tour, Day 7 is yours to spend at leisure.

Days 8-10. Denver and the Rocky Mountains

Board the overnight California Zephyr towards Denver. On Day 10, continue into the Rocky Mountain National Park for stunning mountain views.

Days 11-12. The Rocky Mountains

Climb aboard the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad for an atmospheric journey into the Rocky Mountains. After breaking at Grand Junction for the night, board the iconic steam-hauled Durango & Silverton Railroad towards New Mexico.

Days 13-14. Monument Valley, Flagstaff and the Grand Canyon

Journey through Navajo country to Flagstaff, passing through the famous rocky plateaus of Monument Valley en-route. Take a drive along the legendary Route 66, before joining the Grand Canyon Railway on Day 14.

Days 15-18. Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Coast Starlight

Experience the glamour of Las Vegas, before transferring to Los Angeles for a sightseeing tour and a walk down the iconic Hollywood

Boulevard. On Day 17, join Amtrak's Coast Starlight for a leisurely ride to San Francisco. A guided tour on Day 18 includes the Golden Gate Bridge and Fisherman's Wharf.

Days 19-20. Homewards

Catch your flight back to the UK, arriving the next day.

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The abrasive star who became Hollywood's elder statesman

Kirk Douglas
1916-2020

Intense, rugged and muscular, with only his famous dimpled chin to suggest an underlying vulnerability, Kirk Douglas, who has died aged 103, was a towering figure in Hollywood in the postwar era, and one of the last surviving links to its so-called Golden Age, said The New York Times. From 1946, he appeared in around 90 films, but unusually for a leading man of his stature, he rarely played romantic leads. Instead he specialised in “tough sons of bitches”. Douglas was himself a “born fighter”. Driven, abrasive and confident, he overcame extreme poverty and defied anti-Semitism, stood up to the studio system, and survived a series of debilitating strokes, not to mention a helicopter crash, to establish himself as a living legend. Although he never won an acting Oscar, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and was justly proud of having helped to end Hollywood's communist blacklist, by insisting the screenwriter Dalton Trumbo be named in the credits for his epic 1960 film *Spartacus*. His friends had warned him it could end his career, and later he mused that he'd probably not have stuck his neck out had he been older, “but I was young enough to say to hell with it”.

Born Issur Danielovitch in Amsterdam, New York state, in 1916, Kirk Douglas was the son of illiterate Russian Jewish immigrants who spoke Yiddish at home. His childhood was desperately poor. His father, he recalled, was a ragman – which even in their poor neighbourhood, put him on the “lowest rung on the ladder” – and anti-Semitism was rife in the mainly WASP town. “Kids on every street corner beat you up,” he wrote in his 1988 autobiography *The Ragman's Son*. But Douglas wouldn't be beaten up for long. Even as a boy he stood up to bullies: he recalled that the bravest thing he ever did was flicking a teaspoon full of hot tea at his tyrannical father; and though never a tall man (only 5ft 9in), he was a talented wrestler in his youth – and by his teens, was already attractive to women. He lost his virginity to his English teacher, aged 15. “I realise she could have gone to jail for it, but she got me interested in poetry,” he said. It was at high school that he decided to become an actor.

Determined to get on in life, he hitchhiked to St. Lawrence University, and talked the dean into admitting him. Although rejected from the fraternities for being Jewish, he was elected student president. He then won a scholarship to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Manhattan, by which time he had given himself a WASPY new name, Kirk Douglas. There, he made a lifelong friend in Betty Joan Perske, who would later change her name too, to Lauren Bacall. In her memoir, she recalled that he was so poor at that time, she gave him her uncle's coat to keep warm. His first wife was their fellow student Diana Dill. They married in 1943 – by which time he was serving in the navy – and had two children, Michael and Joel, before divorcing in 1951. An inveterate womaniser, Douglas would go on to have affairs with several of his leading ladies: surrounded by beautiful women, he was “like a kid in the candy store”, he said. However, he claimed to have been true to his second wife, Anne Buydens, “in my fashion”. Having married in 1954, they had two sons: Eric, who died of an accidental drugs overdose in 2004, and Peter.



Douglas: helped break Hollywood's blacklist

Douglas was invalided out of the services in 1944, and returned to New York. He was starting to make his name as a stage actor when Bacall – who was already in Hollywood – recommended Douglas to the producer Hal B. Wallis. In 1946, he made his film debut in *The Strange Life of Martha Ivers*. He excelled in the role of a mother-dominated weakling, but it was playing a ruthless boxer in *Champion*, in 1949, that made his name. It won him his first of three Oscar nominations. One critic described his performance as “alarmingly authentic”. After that, his preference would always be for characters who were hard-edged, and even nasty, said The Guardian. “I don't find virtue photogenic,” he said. “What is it to be a nice guy? To be nothing, that's what. A big fat zero with a smile for everybody.”

In Billy Wilder's 1951 film *Ace in the Hole* he played a callous newspaper reporter preying on the misery of a man trapped in a collapsed mine, while in *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952), he was a manipulative Hollywood producer, rumoured to have been based on David O. Selznick. “A shit, but such an interesting guy,” he said of the character. “I'm probably the most disliked guy in Hollywood,” Douglas once said of himself. “And I feel pretty good about it as that's me.”

In 1956, however, he was a surprisingly convincing Vincent van Gogh in *Lust for Life*, a departure from type that earned him a rebuke from John Wayne. “Christ, Kirk! How can you play a part like that?” he demanded. “There's so goddam few of us left. We got to play strong, tough characters. Not those weak queers.” Douglas later revealed that it was one of the only times he ever felt in danger of being subsumed by a role. In 1957, he worked with Stanley Kubrick on the anti-war classic *Paths of Glory*. In

1960, he hired Kubrick to direct *Spartacus*, which was made by Bryna, the production company he had by then founded (and named after his mother).

About a defiant escaped slave, it contains the famous line

“I am Spartacus”. Through Bryna, Douglas also bought the rights to Ken Kesey's 1962 book *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. In 1963, Douglas played its lead role of McMurphy in a Broadway production, but he struggled to get a film version made. Eventually he gave the rights to his son Michael, who cast Jack Nicholson in the role his father had craved. The film won five Oscars in 1976 – including best actor for Nicholson.

After that, Douglas appeared in only a handful of films, but he wrote several memoirs (one of which was called *I am Spartacus!*), and a bestselling novel. He rediscovered his Jewish faith after being badly injured in a helicopter crash in 1991. In 1996, he suffered a severe stroke, which left him unable to speak, and near suicidal. However, weeks later he was well enough to accept a lifetime achievement award at the Oscars and deliver a short speech about his 50 years in the business. In later life, he strove to become a better father and a better husband, said The Times. He also became one of Hollywood's most generous philanthropists: he gave away some \$35m to various causes, selling some of his art collection to fund his foundation. He took a particular interest in a mentoring scheme he funded for troubled teenagers, which involved each one being given a \$500 cheque on graduating from high school. He insisted on handing over these himself, in person.

“What's is it to be a nice guy? To be nothing, that's what. A big fat zero with a smile for everybody”

Unlocking potential in the overlooked and unloved

Alex Wright's Fidelity Special Values investment trust seeks out undervalued stocks with strong growth potential



In November last year, the **Fidelity Special Values (LSE: FSV)** investment trust celebrated its 25th anniversary. From the day when it was launched by Anthony Bolton – one of the most successful fund managers in British history – the trust has focused on investing in unloved companies, trading on cheap valuations, whose potential for recovery has been overlooked by the wider market. That contrarian approach has continued unchanged under Bolton's successors – first Sanjeev Shah, and now Alex Wright, who has been running the portfolio since 2012.

While the trust can invest up to 20% of its assets in overseas markets, its primary focus is on the UK market. This is a particularly fertile hunting ground for contrarians just now, as political uncertainty – both within Britain and on the global stage – has left the UK market standing out as being cheap and unloved relative to both its global peers and its own history.

Clearly one risk for any contrarian is that a stock that looks cheap could be a “value trap” – in other words, it could be cheap with good reason. Within the UK in particular, some domestic stocks face long-term structural issues. So Wright focuses on the downside at all times. Ideally, a company will be

exceptionally cheap, undergoing positive change, and have some sort of asset backing that provides a floor for the share price.

After several years of outperformance, many of today's most popular funds focus on growth stocks, rather than less glamorous value stocks. However, notes Wright, it's important for investors to diversify not only by geography and asset class, but by strategy too. “It is clear that investors in growth equities are taking on much more risk than they have done in the past, given the valuations they are paying.”

Indeed, the Special Values trust thrives on volatility and uncertainty – those are precisely the conditions that create opportunities to buy good stocks at low prices. Right now, although Wright sees a broad spread of value across the market, deteriorating fundamentals in some cyclical areas mean he is increasingly finding value in defensive stocks – both classic defensive such as utilities as well as cheaper with “hidden” defensive qualities. Elsewhere he is finding interesting opportunities among smaller domestic-facing businesses that are yet to recover and factor in receding political uncertainty and improving confidence in the UK.

It's vital that a contrarian can take a long-term view – the market may take time to wake

up to a stock's hidden merits, and during that period its share price may go even lower. Equally, Wright is sure to stick to a “strict sell discipline” – when a stock's recovery has been recognised by the market, he takes his profits and moves on.

This is why the investment trust structure is an advantage – having a permanent pool of capital means that Wright can take positions in out-of-favour mid- and small-cap companies without the fear that investor withdrawals might force him to exit at an inopportune moment. The trust's diverse portfolio of 80 to 120 stocks also helps to ensure reliable liquidity.

As the events of 2020 so far have already illustrated, it is important to tread carefully. But, says Wright, “we are confident that our focus on businesses with strong balance sheets, a self-help story and a relevant offering that should withstand structural change will serve investors well”.

Learn more about Fidelity Special Values at fidelity.co.uk/specialvalues

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Companies in the news ...and how they were assessed



Seven days in the Square Mile

Global markets raced higher on hopes that the coronavirus's economic impact might be restricted to a short shock largely confined to the Asia-Pac region – and that central banks would act in the event of a wider hit. The **Stoxx Europe 600** rose to a record high, and yet more records were set on Wall Street.

Meanwhile, traditional safe havens, such as gold, dipped. Brent crude rose more than 2% midweek to above \$55/barrel. Greece's borrowing costs hit a record low amid evidence of economic recovery. Having spiked above 30% at the height of the eurozone debt crisis, the country's ten-year bond yield dropped below 1% for the first time.

In Britain, official figures showed that the economy stagnated in the last quarter of 2019, taking overall growth for the year down to 1.4%, below the IMF's 1.5% forecast. But government trade data showed that exports climbed 5% last year to £689bn, with UK exports to non-EU countries rising by 13.6%.

The UK motor industry slammed the Government's target for a ban on new diesel, hybrid and petrol vehicles by 2035 as unworkable. **Burberry** and **Canada Goose** joined a roster of luxury brands warning about the impact of the coronavirus. Prince Harry was reported to have held talks with **Goldman Sachs** about a possible new role: he may follow **David Beckham** and **Gwyneth Paltrow** as a guest speaker at the Wall Street bank's "Talks at GS".

Huawei: Germany joins the rebels

Donald Trump reportedly "slammed down the phone" on Boris Johnson when told of his decision to grant Huawei access to Britain's 5G network, said Chris Baynes in The Independent. After lobbying the UK as part of his "global bid" to ensure that the Chinese tech firm is excluded from the West's next-generation telecoms systems, the US president was said to be "apoplectic" about the decision to allow Huawei access to "non-core" elements of the project. Despite this, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said he remains "reasonably confident" that the US will feature "in the first wave of post-Brexit trade deals" – and now Britain has found further support, said Andreas Rinke on Reuters. In another rebuff to Trump, German lawmakers this week stopped short of banning Huawei after weeks of wrangling with "hardliners" who sympathise with US warnings that the company is " beholden to Beijing". Huawei likes to claim it's an "independent Chinese company", said Alex Brummer in the Daily Mail. Yet recent developments in the 2017 Equifax data-breach scandal – which compromised personal information relating to 145 million Americans and 700,000 Britons stored by the credit-checking agency – should ring warning bells. The US Justice Department has just charged four members of China's People's Liberation Army with orchestrating the "largest data hack in history".

NMC Health: chronic symptoms

Shares in NMC Health, the beleaguered FTSE 100 private hospital operator, have fallen by around 70% since December, when the feared US short-seller Muddy Waters started raising questions about its finances. One way out of the mess would be a takeover, said Ben Marlow in The Daily Telegraph. But there's a catch. "Before anyone can make an offer, NMC first has to work out who exactly owns its shares." The company admitted this week that the holdings of its billionaire founder Bavaguthu Raghuram Shetty and two other controlling shareholders "may have been misreported to the stock market". According to his company biography, Shetty is "a visionary leader who follows his heart and intuition", said Nils Pratley in The Guardian. Sadly, stock exchange rules "don't allow room for doing your own thing" – basics like ownership are meant to be reported correctly. "As an advert for London's supposedly high standards of governance and transparency, the saga looks dreadful." Too right, said Brooke Masters in the FT. Some politicians argue that a "big bonfire" of rules will help Britain remain an attractive global centre for finance. NMC is "a timely reminder of how badly things can go wrong".

TV broadcasters: Super Bowled over

Around 100 million American football fans tuned into the Super Bowl last week, with 30-second commercials going for \$5.6m apiece. It was a "supersized reminder", said The Observer, that "the Netflix effect is far from terminal for traditional broadcasters". But although hit shows still pull in audiences, "linear" viewing is declining, especially among the young. "A quarter of British children watched no broadcast TV last year", according to a new Ofcom report, "while twice as many watched streaming content compared with five years ago". Broadcasters' catch-up TV services do a good job of "bolstering viewing", but still struggle to keep up. Disney, a new streaming "superpower", has amassed 28.6 million subscribers in just three months – and it hasn't even fully rolled out its service yet.

Credit Suisse: how a spying scandal forced a CEO's ousting

Is there anyone at Credit Suisse who wasn't under surveillance? Switzerland's second largest bank has ousted its French-Ivorian CEO, Tidjane Thiam, following a "saga of corporate espionage and personal vendettas that has sent shock waves through Switzerland's famously discreet banking community", said The Guardian. Thiam, a former Prudential boss "widely seen as one of the finance industry's leading lights", resigned after losing a boardroom power struggle that erupted after the bank admitted to hiring private detectives to spy on former staff. He still claims he had "no knowledge of the observation".



Thiam: damned either way?

The "lurid" saga began last September when Iqbal Khan – formerly a "star banker" in Credit Suisse's wealth-management division – alleged that "up to three men hired by the bank chased him across Zurich", said Harry Robertson in City AM. The affair took a dark turn a month later when a

"middleman" committed suicide and details of a "feud between Thiam and Khan" (who were also next-door neighbours) emerged – including reports of a toxic row at a party. It later transpired that Credit Suisse had also been spying on its former HR director.

Thiam's departure might surprise some, said Lex in the FT. In a showdown over who should leave – the CEO or the chairman, Urs Rohner – international investors backed the "smart and charismatic" Thiam. But he had to go, said Jeremy Warner in The Sunday Telegraph: he was "damned as a knave" if he knew about the spying allegations, "and as a fool if he didn't". Still, don't expect this affair to end there. In this

classic tale of globalism versus localism, "the Swiss establishment has triumphed over the wishes of global investors". It should enjoy its victory while it lasts. There's bound to be a price paid for Zurich's "xenophobia".



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Talking points

CITY 8

Issue of the week: BP's energy crisis

The oil and gas major says it wants to become "a tech company". What are the chances of that?

The new boss of BP, Bernard Looney, was described last year as "the man to win over the millennials". He missed a chance to do that last week, said Emily Gosden in *The Times*. As Greenpeace protesters blockaded the oil major's London HQ, Looney was posting Instagram updates from Germany, "where he was meeting a rather more sympathetic crowd of BP employees". There followed a weekend of protest at the British Museum (where BP is a sponsor), which, according to *The Guardian*, was backed by museum staff. Even the Church of England is in on the action, leading calls for the oil major to cut its carbon emissions to "net zero". There's a long way to go. BP's current "carbon footprint, including customers using its products, is larger than that of the entire UK".



Anti-BP protesters at the British Museum

Looney has said that he wants BP to be seen as much as "a tech company" as anything else. But as the oil major grapples with the global shift to green energy, he faces the difficult task of trying to juggle pressure from campaigners and ethical investors, while also soothing other shareholders more concerned about protecting their dividends. The long tilt "away from high-carbon stocks and towards disruptive greener alternatives is already under way", said Michael Mackenzie in the *FT*. But few investors could have imagined it would be quite so "abrupt and startling". The energy

sector's weighting in the S&P 500 has shrunk from 11.4% in 2010 to less than 4% today. Meanwhile, Exxon-Mobil – the planet's most valuable company in 2012 – has dropped off the list of the world's top ten biggest companies altogether. The push towards meeting tougher climate standards is weighing heavily on the sector, "with some warning of a future where oil majors may never extract their vast reserves".

Oil majors are facing "a particularly tough" year, with a slump in Chinese demand thanks to the coronavirus – and a corresponding fall in the oil price – weighing heavily on their figures, said

Michelle McGagh on *Citywire*. BP's profits plunged 26% last quarter, though the company pleased investors by announcing a 2.4% rise in the dividend. But Looney has balanced that by setting a more ambitious carbon reduction target than European rivals such as Shell and Total, said Anjli Raval in the *FT*. It is pledging net-zero emissions by 2050 or sooner, and "a 50% cut in the carbon intensity of the products BP sells". That wasn't enough, though, to pacify Greenpeace, which noted the billions BP will continue to invest in new oil and gas production. Looney's contract reveals that he's "entitled to a car appropriate to his status" while performing his duties, observed *Prufrock* in the *Sunday Times*. "Let's hope it's an electric one."

Tory tax plans: what the experts think

● Soak the rich?

Who'd have thought it, said Polly Toynbee in *The Guardian*. The "triumphant Tories" may be toying with the idea of taking "a leaf out of Jeremy Corbyn's defeated manifesto". The Chancellor, Sajid Javid, is reportedly eyeing up a "mansion tax" on expensive houses and a raid on pensions tax relief in the forthcoming Budget, to help finance the Government's "levelling up" strategy. Any new tax on property is "risky". But pensions tax relief is an obvious target: "it costs the state almost £40bn, and 40% of it goes to the top 10% – those earning £80,000 or more". What's more, it's incredibly unjust. While average earners in the lower tax band get just 20p tax relief on "each pension pound saved", those on more than £50,000 get 40p. Limiting everyone to 20% would not only save the Government £10bn, it would also send a powerful message.

● Half-baked

Unsurprisingly, both proposals have come under fire from the financial experts, said *The Daily Telegraph*. "A mansion tax in isolation would be half-baked," according to accountant George Bull of RSM. How, for instance, would it work vis-à-vis the



Javid: the new Jeremy Corbyn?

council tax, which similarly needs reforming? It would also be "very unpopular", as Paul Johnson of the Institute for Fiscal Studies points out, because "it wouldn't be based on a flow of income, as income tax is – the money would just come straight out of your

bank account". Pensions experts declare themselves to be equally aghast at the prospect of higher-rate pensions tax relief being abolished, describing the idea as "an act of fiscal hooliganism".

● Levelling down

They're right about that, said Alex Brummer in the *Daily Mail*. "Taxing pensions is a false economy", because it would "fatally damage" a savings culture already "badly holed" by previous tax raids. And the history of property taxes is "complicated", to say the least. When the former Tory chancellor, George Osborne, introduced "a penal level of stamp duty" on house sales in 2016, the yield from stamp duty actually fell because the market froze. The political strategy behind these proposals is clear. "But far from levelling up, a Budget dominated by tax rises would be tantamount to levelling down." It would "devastate wealth creation".

Scotland 1, England 0

The Scots may have lost to the English in the Six Nations rugby tournament at Murrayfield last weekend. But they can at least "celebrate one victory" over their fiercest rivals, said Mark Atherton in *The Times*. According to a new report from wealth manager Brewin Dolphin, "if you are investing for the long term, you should pick Scottish, not English, companies".

Brewin found that Scottish stocks on the FTSE all-share index returned 281% over the past 15 years, compared with 201% for the whole of the index, which is dominated by English stocks. The Scots also did better over ten years, returning 185% to the all-share's 115% – although over five years, "they were behind" by 35% to 47%.

One of the best performers was the Edinburgh-based Scottish Mortgage investment trust, run by James Anderson of Baillie Gifford, "which invests heavily in technology stocks such as Amazon, Netflix and Tesla". Over 15 years, it has delivered a whopping return of 1,050%. Other big gainers include the packaging distributor Macfarlane and soft drinks producer AG Barr, which makes Irn Bru. The Scottish tally would have been even higher were it not for "one stock that dragged overall performance down". Step forward RBS, "which lost 93%" following its crash in 2008.

The “tectonic” shift that’s rocking China

David Smith

The Times

When production is shut down for a lengthy period, as it has been in parts of China owing to the coronavirus, growth takes a hit “that’s rarely made up later”, says David Smith. Last year China’s growth, at 6.1%, was the weakest since 1990. This year the figure “is likely to start with a ‘5’ for the first time in a very long time”. And global industry faces a “double hit from a weaker Chinese market and the disruption of supply chains that rely on factories in China”. Yet in many ways, the impact of the coronavirus is just accelerating existing trends. As Bank of America notes, global supply chains were already undergoing “tectonic shifts” before the outbreak, with activity starting to shift away from China. The trade war has played a part in that, but so too has the fact that China’s tempting low labour costs have been eroded by rising wages and by automation. Concerns about national security and carbon footprints have also prompted a rethink in some Western companies. In the longer term, Britain could benefit from the “reshoring” of some manufacturing activity. Right now, however, “UK manufacturing is struggling to hold on to what it has got”.

The fiction of frictionless trade

Peter Foster

The Daily Telegraph

So much for the promise of “frictionless trade” with the EU after Brexit, says Peter Foster. Michael Gove, the Cabinet Office Minister, told business groups this week that “full import controls will be introduced” by the end of 2020 – “a radical shift” from the “no-deal” planning under Theresa May, which “prioritised the flow of goods over the need for checks”. And it now seems the technology for the “smart trade border” Gove had set so much store by won’t be available until at least 2025. Under the Government’s new “hard-line” approach, all agri-food products will face border inspection posts, with imports from the EU being given identical treatment to those from the rest of the world. That could well “trigger lengthy delays and even disruption to food supplies”. There is some succour for business: the Government has promised funding to adjust to the new regime, and has extended the deadline for businesses to apply to January 2021. Even so, we can expect a good deal of red tape ahead. “Estimates from HMRC suggest that the number of customs declarations could rise from 55 million at present, to more than 200 million.”

Can the gold-diggers recover their sparkle?

Editorial

The Economist

Gold companies have been looking “rather leaden” for some years now, says The Economist. At roughly \$300bn, the combined value of dozens of listed miners remains “less than that of the maker of Nescafé Gold coffee”. There are a few bright signs. Economic uncertainty and low interest rates pushed gold prices up by 19% last year, the fastest rate since 2010, and share prices have surged too. But “the industry hasn’t dug itself out of a hole quite yet”. Recent spending restraints by firms have meant less money for all-important exploration. In fact, analysts reckon production might be peaking, with declines forecast in the 2020s. There’s another problem too. These “energy-intensive” companies often operate in areas with a history of corruption and instability; investors increasingly eye their “environmental, social and governance metrics” with suspicion. And for all their efforts to lower emissions and behave more ethically, there’s still a risk investors will put these companies in the same environmentally “grubby” category as the oil industry – but “minus the generous dividends”.

Sack employees who fail the sandwich test

Henry Mance

Financial Times

They say there’s no such thing as a free lunch and, at Citigroup, “they apparently mean it literally”, says Henry Mance. The bank has suspended a senior City bond trader for allegedly stealing sandwiches from the office canteen. The natural reaction to this news is: is Citi mad? The trader was said to be highly successful – “any minor larceny would have been dwarfed by his morning’s profits”. Besides, which of us hasn’t taken bios from the office stationery cupboard or used work phones to call overseas friends? Even so, Citigroup was probably right. There are some roles – the US presidency, for one – in which you can be financially dishonest and get away with it. But, as the City watchdog regularly preaches, money people need to be held to a higher standard. And from a regulator’s point of view, straightforward theft is a far easier way to gauge a person’s basic morality than the use of exotic financial instruments and other dodgy practices. So maybe tech companies should scrap their free canteens. “That way they might finally be able to identify, and fire, some of their morality-light employees.”

City profiles

Carlos Ghosn

He might be holed up in Lebanon after jumping bail in Japan, but Carlos Ghosn, is still in the cross-hairs of his former employer, said BBC Business News. Nissan has filed a \$90m civil lawsuit against its former chairman to claw back “monetary damages”. And even that might not be the end of it. The Japanese carmaker is also contemplating suing Ghosn for defamation after he blamed “a handful of unscrupulous, vindictive individuals” for his “unimaginable ordeal”. Ghosn’s daring escape has “Hollywood movie” written all over it, said The Times. And he’s found a powerful new partner in Michael Ovitz – co-founder of the Creative Artists Agency and a former Disney president. The pair are reportedly exploring potentially lucrative “film and TV projects”. The cash could come in handy.

Alison Rose



After making history by becoming “the first female boss at a major high street lender”, Alison Rose will be hoping to make her mark at Royal Bank of Scotland by unveiling a “fresh strategy” for the 293-year-old bank, said The Observer. RBS is still 62.4% owned by the British taxpayer following its £45.5bn state bailout in 2008 – but fortunately, the worst looks behind it. The bank was expected to report its “third consecutive year of profit” this week. Not a bad spring-board. Some reckon that “if Rose plays her cards right”, she could preside over “the closest thing to a golden age since the 2008 crash”. But there’s a long way to go. The bank’s shares are still trading at “less than half the 502p per share” that the government paid for its stake.

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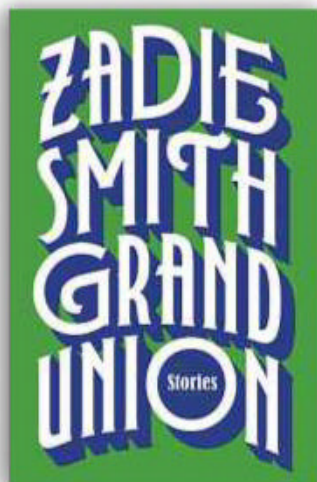
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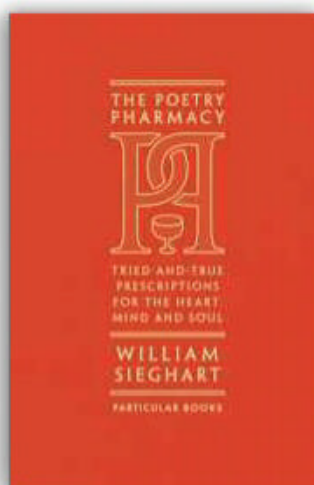
Published
5 March

The Poetry Pharmacy

William Sieghart

Sometimes only a poem will do. These poetic prescriptions and wise words of advice offer comfort, delight and inspiration for all; a space for reflection, and that precious realisation - "I'm not the only one who feels like this".

£10.99 ~~£12.99~~



Curiosities and Splendour

Lonely Planet

Journey back in time with this collection of classic travel writing from great authors and adventurers. These extraordinary odysseys over land and sea captivated audiences and gave them a glimpse into countries, cities and cultures like never before.

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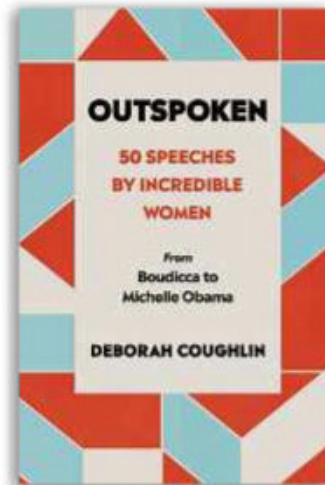
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Deborah Coughlin

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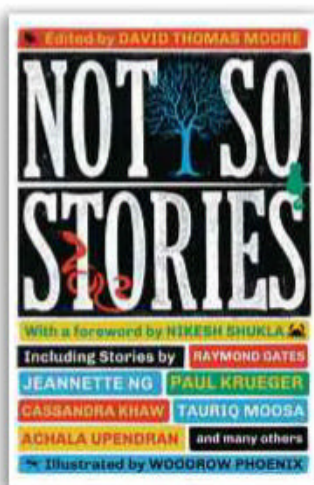
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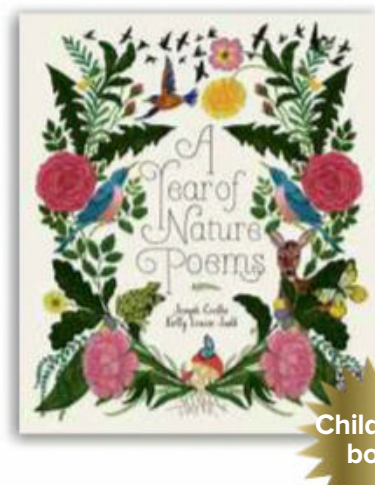


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Shares

CITY 55

Who's tipping what

The week's best shares

4imprint Group

Investors Chronicle

4imprint markets promotional items (bags, pens, umbrellas). Growing organically in the US, with strong cash generation. The extremely capital-light business model means that there's plenty of scope to grow. Buy. £33.

Gateley

The Times

Since listing five years ago, this law firm, which provides services to 18 of the UK's 20 largest housebuilders, is performing well. Revenues and profits are rising at "healthy levels". Yields an attractive 4.2%. Buy. 214p.

McCarthy & Stone

The Times

After overambitious expansion, the retirement home specialist now favours modest growth at sustainable margins. The decision to rent homes, as well as sell, makes it more resilient. Valued at 11.6 times Peel Hunt's forecast earnings. Yields 4.7%. Buy. 149.5p.

Midwich Group

The Times

A specialist in broadcasting, Midwich supplies TVs to offices, hotels and gyms, and advises sports stadiums and concert arenas on equipment. Geographically diverse, and a market leader. Buy. 534p.

Rentokil Initial

Investors Chronicle

Rentokil has returned to its roots as a pest controller – a sector promising "long-term defensive growth". Growing through acquisitions in a fragmented US market, with commercial contracts bringing visibility. Buy. 471p.

Smurfit Kappa Group

The Share Centre

Focused on sustainable, biodegradable paper, Smurfit Kappa is the largest packaging producer in Europe. Expanding, with rising sales and profits thanks to internet shopping. Yields 3.5%. Buy. £29.72.

Directors' dealings

Asos



After "myriad challenges" in 2019, revenues in the online fashion group are growing as it expands geographically. In a show of confidence, CEO Nick Beighton has upped his stake with a £49,847 share purchase.

SOURCE: INVESTORS CHRONICLE

...and some to hold, avoid or sell

Electrocomponents

The Sunday Telegraph

The electronic products distributor, dubbed the "Amazon of electrics", has simplified and scaled-up its ops, boosting profitability. But capex has doubled and weakness in Europe is ominous. Take profits. Sell. 706.2p.

Joules Group

The Sunday Times

The "cuddly countryside" clothing brand's online sales are growing. But 90% of its stock is from China, where it faces coronavirus-related factory shutdowns. Trade wars could hit US growth. Avoid. 175p.

Spirent Communications

The Daily Telegraph

This leader in telecoms networks testing has seen cash and profits surge, and is investing in staff and marketing for a 5G boom. But slipping earnings estimates are worrying, given the "heady valuation". Avoid. 216p.

Future

The Daily Telegraph

The magazine publisher's shares have gained 273% in two years. But its acquisition-based strategy and 2019's organic growth report have attracted a short-seller, affecting momentum. Take profits. Sell. £12.98.

S4 Capital

The Times

Martin Sorrell's digital-only advertising agency has three complementary specialisms: content, media buying and first-party data. Growing globally by acquisition in a highly competitive market. Hold. 207p.

Zotefoams

Investors Chronicle

Heavy investment in plant, property and equipment has fuelled the foam-maker's debt, just as its end markets are showing a "marked slowdown". The £7.8m pension deficit is equally concerning. Sell. 415p.

Form guide

Shares tipped 12 weeks ago

Best tip

Pennon Group

Investors Chronicle
up 26.44% to £11.43

Worst tip

Northgate

The Times
down 18.25% to 275.5p

Market view

"There's a growing view in financial markets that there's light at the end of the tunnel."

Kit Juckes of Société Générale on hopes that the coronavirus outbreak might be plateauing. Quoted in the FT

Market summary

Key numbers for investors

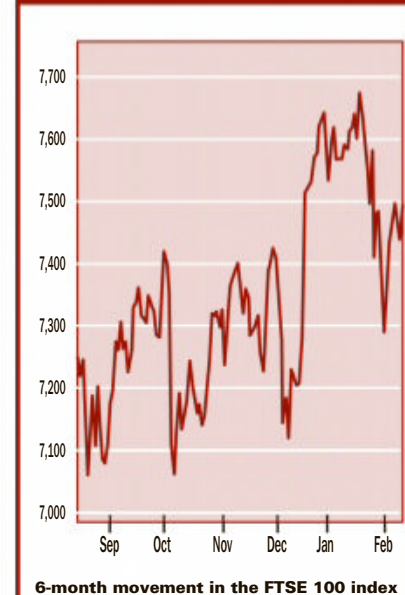
	11 Feb 2020	Week before	Change (%)
FTSE 100	7499.44	7439.82	0.80%
FTSE All-share UK	4170.07	4136.76	0.81%
Dow Jones	29293.32	28871.89	1.46%
NASDAQ	9669.76	9455.84	2.26%
Nikkei 225	23685.98	23084.59	2.61%
Hang Seng	27583.88	26675.98	3.40%
Gold	1573.20	1574.75	-0.10%
Brent Crude Oil	54.33	54.96	-1.15%
DIVIDEND YIELD (FTSE 100)	4.37%	4.41%	
UK 10-year gilts yield	0.59	0.59	
US 10-year Treasuries	1.58	1.60	
UK ECONOMIC DATA			
Latest CPI (yoy)	1.3% (Dec)	1.5% (Nov)	
Latest RPI (yoy)	2.2% (Dec)	2.2% (Nov)	
Halifax house price (yoy)	+4.1% (Jan)	+4.0% (Dec)	
£1 STERLING	\$1.297	€1.188	¥142.622

Best and worst performing shares

WEEK'S CHANGE, FTSE 100 STOCKS		
RISES	Price	% change
Tui (Lon)	967.80	+18.89
Smurfit Kappa Group	2990.00	+10.01
Mondi	1695.00	+7.48
SSE	1642.00	+6.80
Smith (DS)	374.50	+6.27
FALLS		
NMC Health	778.20	-22.30
Hargreaves Lansdown	1639.00	-7.82
GlaxoSmithKline	1703.40	-6.15
BT Group	153.56	-5.69
Imperial Brands	1878.80	-3.81
BEST AND WORST UK STOCKS OVERALL		
Starvest	6.60	+103.08
All Active Asset	0.18	-56.25

Source: Datastream (not adjusted for dividends). Prices on 11 Feb (pm)

Following the Footsie



6-month movement in the FTSE 100 index

The last word

“I’ve seen death in this city, but nothing as sad as this”

Last spring, a ferry disaster claimed the lives of dozens of innocent men, women and children in the Iraqi city of Mosul. But as well as being a human tragedy, the incident also laid bare the failure of an entire country, says Ghaith Abdul-Ahad

On 21 March 2019, in Mosul’s al-Baker neighbourhood, a school principal named Ustad Ahmad put on his new summer blazer, jeans and wraparound sunglasses as he prepared to go out. It was the start of the new year holiday of Nowruz, and he was planning to take his wife and children to an amusement park – a reward for the full marks achieved by his two sons in their recent exams. Tall and burly, Ahmad was a proud man – proud of his smart boys, his beautiful baby daughter and, above all, his clever, outgoing wife. At around 1pm, the family took a taxi to the amusement park, where he gave the boys money to go on every ride.

Things hadn’t always been as comfortable for Ahmad as they were now. When Islamic State took over Mosul in 2014, he had been expelled from his teaching job, and for three years he was unemployed. But now, two years after the liberation of Mosul, he was proud to be a respectable principal once more, even if the city he lived in was still in ruins.

Mosul today is a broken city. The early euphoria of liberation is dissolving as reconstruction efforts have failed. Pledges to rebuild the city remain unfulfilled, while thousands live in camps. The security situation is deteriorating and across Iraq, anger is rising. In recent weeks, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have taken to the streets to demand a complete overhaul of the political system. During two months of demonstrations, 400 people have been killed and thousands injured. At the same time, what endures is the tenacity and resilience of the people of Mosul, their love of life and entrepreneurial spirit. At the end of the war, as the city was retaken block-by-block by the Iraqi army, liberated neighbourhoods quickly sprang back to life. Families returned to their homes and volunteers cleared rubble from their streets. Even as the fighting raged just a few blocks away, people began rebuilding their homes and businesses, occasionally even allowing themselves the small reward of a meal out with their families.

It was close to 2pm when Ahmad’s family decided to go on to Umm Rabaen, a pleasure island on the Tigris River, in search of a shady spot for lunch. It would be cooler by the water and there was another amusement park there to visit. Like many businesses in Mosul since the liberation, the island was part-owned by a member of a powerful militia – one of the armed groups which have secured public contracts for businesses in return for big kickbacks. The businesses they own are unaccountable and, through a combination of fear and corruption, there is almost



Mourners cast flowers on the Tigris the day after the disaster

“By the time it started moving, nearly 300 people were crammed aboard the ferry – far more than it was designed to hold”

no oversight. The result, for the people enjoying their holiday in Mosul that day, was disaster.

The same morning, in another part of Mosul, a woman named Shahla was making coffee, when Umm Yussuf, a friend of her 71-year-old mother, called to invite them both for tea at the pleasure island that afternoon. Shahla thought the island would be too crowded. But her mother wanted to go – so she prepared a picnic and they set off for the river. When they arrived, and saw the crowd gathered on the river bank, Shahla thought that the whole

of Mosul must be there. She didn’t like crowds, and was trying to ask her mother if they could leave, when Umm Yussuf found them. The two old women hugged and the three of them headed towards the ferry to the island.

Umm Rabaen is connected to the east bank of the Tigris, less than 100 metres away, by two cable-pulled flatbed ferries, maintained as part of the amusement park and island. The ferry allegedly had

no safety provisions, and the service was rarely, if ever, inspected. As the crowd waiting for the ferry swelled, a man named Omar watched with growing unease from a nearby motorboat. He noticed that the water was rising quickly: the decks of some riverside cafés were already submerged. The day before, police had told the ferry management it would need to suspend operations because of the unusual quantity of water in the river, after earlier heavy rainfall. Everyone along the river had been warned. But the ferry was running. At 3pm, it docked on the eastern bank, and the families in coloured headscarves squeezed together as they waited to board. Everyone was in their holiday clothes, young men and boys wore suits and bow ties, girls wore dresses with frills.

As Shahla went down the steps to the ferry, she noticed that the water level was very high. Her mother and Umm Yussuf walked behind her, holding hands. At about the same time, Ahmad and his family also climbed down slowly with the pram. The back of the ferry was full, but more people pushed to enter. By the time it started moving, nearly 300 people were crammed onboard – far more than it was designed to hold. Constructed from sections of an old pontoon bridge welded together and decorated with arches on either side, the ferry was pulled by cables connected at the front and back to motors mounted on opposite sides of the river. A third, guiding cable maintained the ferry jerkily on its course, as the current tried to push it downstream. The operator, noticing the ferry was tilting, started telling people to move away from the

The last word

8

listing right side. The back of the ferry was being dragged by the current, pulling the ferry off its line. A few kids climbed over the side railing, to see what was going on.

A small wave gushed over the deck, covering Shahla's feet. Now scared, her mother said the three of them should go back to the shore, as if they could still walk away. Shahla could see others were frightened too. Elsewhere on the ferry, Ahmad stuck by the railing, assuring his wife and children that the ferry would right itself. He clutched the pram tightly. A second, bigger wave surged in. The ferry listed to the right. The boys hanging on the railings threw themselves into the frothing water. Just over a minute into the crossing, the ferry had tilted so far that a third of the deck was underwater, and most of the people were clambering to the other side. Ahmad, standing in water up to his neck, held on to the pram, trying to keep the baby above water. Then he heard a loud grinding noise and saw that the ferry was turning over and that people were sliding down towards him. He gripped the pram tightly but it sank, pulling him underwater, his baby daughter disappearing into the darkness of the river.

At this point, the cable pulling the ferry snapped, and the vessel started to flip over. People fell on top of each other. Shahla was pushed into the water, and lost her mother's hand. When she got back to the surface, a woman climbed on top of her, pushing her down again. She took a breath and sank underwater, allowing herself to be dragged downstream. The hull now stood vertical – a green floating whale drifting downstream, among dozens of bobbing heads. In the water, Shahla was bumped and rammed by objects and bodies. She looked for her mother, but the current was pushing her fast.

After half an hour, her clothes were getting heavy, but she knew that if she didn't keep swimming, she would die. Finally, she managed to catch on to a boat, and haul herself over the side. From the boat, she could see the extent of the disaster. Bodies floated around them, many of them children. There was a tiny boy, three or four, dressed in a onesie and floating on his back.

Deep underwater, Ahmad lost the pram. He too saw a boat and swam to it, grabbing on to the rear engine. But as he clung on desperately, the propellor roared into life: the blades cut into his sides, causing Ahmad to scream and let go. He knew he'd lost his family. Better to die, he thought, as he sank into the water. But his body wouldn't let him drown, and involuntarily he kicked his way to the surface, where he was rescued and taken to the island.

When an officer from the Mosul police arrived on the island, he arrested everyone still working there – including vendors selling coffee and burgers – but the owners and directors of the island were nowhere to be seen. Most of the staff had run away, fearing they would be arrested and anticipating the anger of the victims' families. Meanwhile, the bewilderment of the police laid bare the ineptitude of the Iraqi state. In oil-rich Iraq, the Mosul river police had just one boat, which had sat broken for months; they had no ropes or lifejackets to throw to the people drowning in front of them. While the chief of the river police had jumped in one of the civilian boats and gone to help, most of his men had never trained for such a crisis. They didn't know what to do.

Back on land, Shahla searched in vain for her mother and Umm Yussuf in the hospital. "There was chaos, and no one was in control," she recalled. "Bodies were dumped like sacks of garbage." Later, she spoke to her brother on the phone. He was weeping. Before he said anything, she knew her mother was dead.



The ferry was running that day despite police warnings

Over at the morgue, hundreds of families gathered as the bodies started to arrive. Flanked by policemen, the director climbed on top of a police truck to plead with people to give him time. Even the morgue's staff, accustomed to the sight of death, were weeping. Of the 128 finally confirmed dead, 57 were women, and 44 children. Another 69 are still missing.

Even in a nation accustomed to fanatical militias and mad dictators, the disaster was shocking. When the public discovered a warning had been issued

about the dangers of operating the ferry, grief turned to anger. Within days, the media reported a connection between the island's owner, Ubaid al-Hadidi, and a militia commander. Before the disaster, people in Mosul had felt too scared to speak openly about the militias' economic activities. Now there were protests and sit-ins. The fact that the island's owners were backed by a leader of one of Iraq's fiercest militias, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, would have made it less likely that rules were enforced against them. The day after the disaster, Hadidi claimed that he and his son had not been in Mosul at the time as, he said, an Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq representative had threatened them and demanded a large payment. "We would always shut the island if the water level climbed, but we haven't been in Mosul because of the threats we received," he said. Three days later, Hadidi and his son were arrested. In a TV interview, a representative of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq said: "Even if we accept someone connected to the movement is a partner in the island, that does not mean Asa'ib are responsible for what happened."

"After half an hour in the water, Shahla's clothes were getting heavy, but she knew that if she didn't keep swimming, she would die"

When they brought the body of Ahmad's wife to his house on the night of the accident, he refused to see her. He did not attend her funeral. The body of his elder boy was found the day

after the ferry sank, trapped under the capsized hull. His other son and baby girl will never be found. After the disaster, Ahmad asked his mother to give away his boys' toys and school bags. "I want to forget their memories," he said, voice breaking. Ahmad does not blame incompetence or corruption for the disaster. "Yes, there was negligence," he said, "but what can I do about the owner? Is he much worse than the people who stood watching while others floated in front of them? No one came to save us. When they took me to the island, I saw people eating picnics. This unfeeling attitude: is it because of all the death the city had seen?"

In the autumn, I visited Aya, a young woman who lost her mother and other relatives. "What caused the ferry to sink was corruption and negligence," she told me, her grief mixed with bitterness. "No one cares this happened here." In October, Aya started receiving phone calls from tribal elders, pressuring her to accept an offer of blood money from the owner of the island. Hadidi was offering bereaved families 10m Iraqi dinars [roughly £6,500] and a plot of land if they would drop charges. The elders told her that all the other families had accepted and that she was one of the last holding out. "I was refusing to sign, but all the families had signed. They tell me they won't get anything from the state and they need the money. I don't know what to do."

I called the Iraqi MP Shirwan Dobadani to ask him about the compensation offer. He told me that it was true – two prominent tribal sheikhs had acted as intermediaries. "If the families wait for the judicial system, they won't get anything," he said. "There are thousands of cases of murder and assassination that haven't been solved. The worst disaster in Iraq is forgotten after 72 hours."

A longer version of this article appeared in *The Guardian*.
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Crossword

59

THE WEEK CROSSWORD 1196

An Ettinger travel pass case and two Connell Guides will be given to the sender of the first correct solution to the crossword and the clue of the week opened on Monday 24 February. Send it to: The Week Crossword 1196, 2nd floor, 32 Queensway, London W2 3RX, or email the answers to crossword@theweek.co.uk. **Tim Moorey** (timmoorey.info)



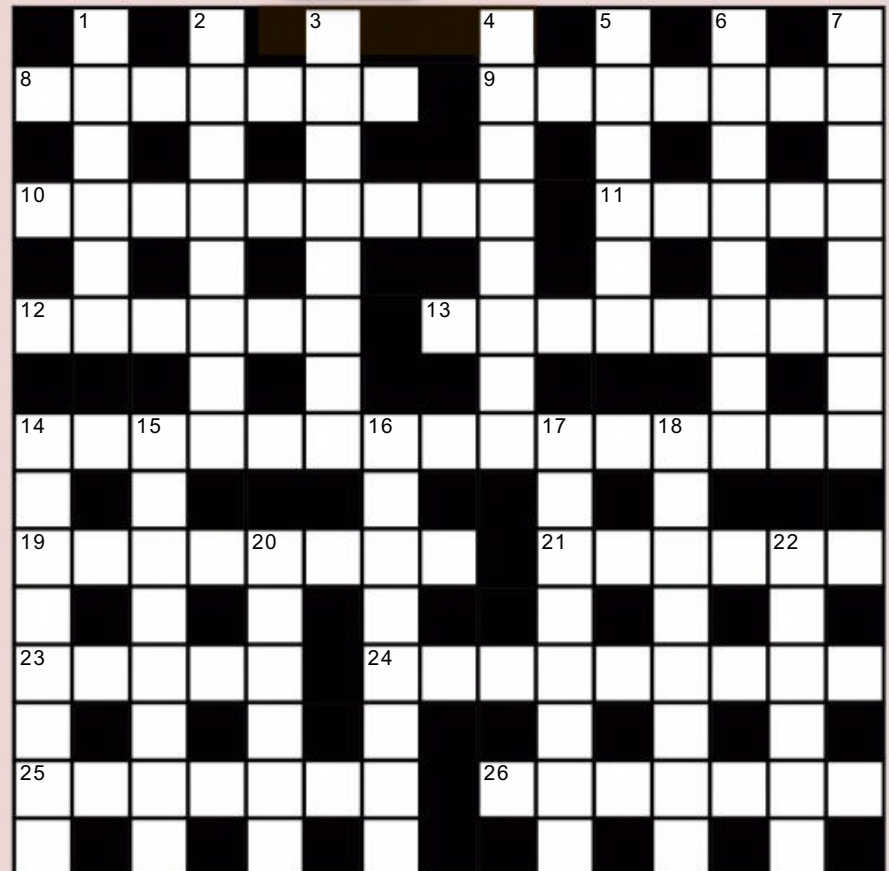
This week's winner will receive an Ettinger (ettinger.co.uk) Bridle hide travel pass case in black, which retails at £105, and two Connell Guides (connellguides.com).

ACROSS

- 8 One into cream crackers left sweet (7)
9 Leaders missing, check overdue copy (7)
10 Jazz trumpeter and tenor in a significant event (9)
11 Sounds like kind, upright member (5)
12 Praises eggs on toast (6)
13 Intense passion shown by soldier in dance (8)
14 Resort offering great ride on horseback into the sunset? (6-5-4)
19 Idiot crowding round interior of broken convertible? (6-2)
21 Back home in drive for discipline (6)
23 Nameless financier is one with lots of dough (5)
24 Afghans in conflict? (4,2,3)
25 Make good journey in single attempt (2,3,2)
26 Dull lady seen in small picture (7)

DOWN

- 1 District standard is hard (6)
2 Tendency to cover same ground in underlying support (8)
3 Ditch aircraft? No, it's flying (8)
4 Silverstone skid: team's on the edge (8)
5 Not an intelligent amount of Chinese food? (3,3)
6 A chained mongrel seen in ranch abroad (8)
7 See author run away with this girl (8)
14 Angry with nothing inside apart from strong meat (4,4)
15 Keep to north for English town (8)
16 Present in second delivery is a plant (8)
17 Large exhibition certain to get publicity (8)
18 Make clear list of passengers (8)
20 Starting with a little Latin, this employee could become a student (6)
22 Secret police force first in special arrest (6)



Name

Address

Tel no

Clue of the week answer:

Clue of the week: Nobelist in job, a man avoiding extremes (5)
The Guardian, Brendan

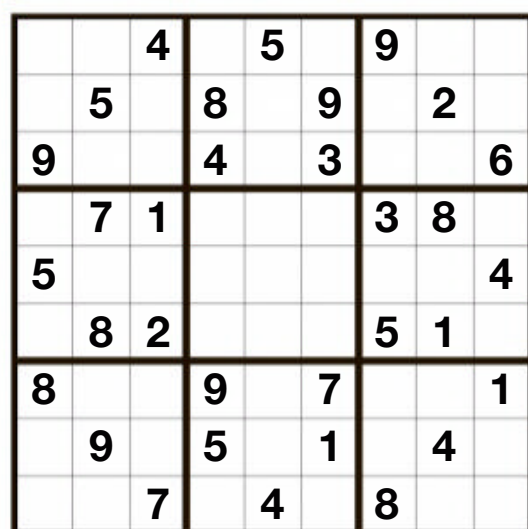
Solution to Crossword 1194

ACROSS: 1 Palindromes 9 Unicorn 10 Tangier 11 In a mess 12 Oration 13 Abyssinia 15 Eagle 16 Cacti 19 Teenagers 22 African 23 Shar pei 24 Run into 25 On the go 26 The Hebrides

DOWN: 1 Primacy 2 Lioness 3 Nanas 4 Rationale 5 Mandate 6 Sailing 7 Musical chairs 8 Drunken sailor 14 Net income 17 Coronet 18 Incense 20 Adapted 21 Express 23 Stour

Clue of the week: Why climb Everest? Ice sheet's a brute to struggle with (7,3,5) **Solution:** BECAUSE IT'S THERE (anagram of ICE SHEET'S A BRUTE)
The winner of 1194 is Chris Holdridge from Beckenham

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Sudoku 740 (very difficult)

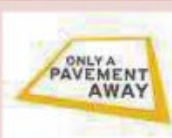
Fill in all the squares so that each row, column and each of the 3x3 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9

Solution to Sudoku 739

4	9	5	7	8	3	1	2	6
7	2	1	6	9	4	8	5	3
3	8	6	5	2	1	4	7	9
6	7	9	1	4	2	3	8	5
8	5	2	3	7	6	9	4	1
1	3	4	8	5	9	2	6	7
2	6	8	9	3	7	5	1	4
5	1	3	4	6	8	7	9	2
9	4	7	2	1	5	6	3	8

brainedup.com

Charity of the week



In the next five years, it is estimated that there will be around 1.3 million vacancies in the hospitality industry as demand for talented workers outstrips supply. At the same time, the number of rough sleepers is on the rise. According to official Government data, there has been a 165% increase since 2010. In a country with the fifth

largest economy, rough sleeping is an unacceptable scandal. Only a Pavement Away is a charity set up to help the homeless, ex-offenders and vulnerable veterans find employment in pubs, bars, hotels and restaurants. Established on World Homeless Day, 10 October 2018, by hospitality industry consultant Greg Mangham, the charity has so far placed one homeless person a week in a job, and has ambitious plans to continue that growth in 2020. **To find out more, visit onlyapavementaway.co.uk.**

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